Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Algiers II- Aboulkacem Saâdallah
-Bouzaréah-
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Department of English

Rural and Urban Environments in Realist and Naturalist Literatures: A Comparative Study of Selected African and American Novels

Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctorate of Sciences in
Anglophone Literature and Civilisation

Submitted by: Supervised by:

Ms Amina BEZZAZI **Prof. M'hamed BENSEMMANE**

March 2023

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Algiers II- Aboulkacem Saâdallah
-Bouzaréah-
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Department of English

Rural and Urban Environments in Realist and Naturalist Literatures: A Comparative Study of Selected African and American Novels

Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctorate of Sciences in
Anglophone Literature and Civilisation

Submitted by: Supervised by:

Ms Amina BEZZAZI **Prof. M'hamed BENSEMMANE**

March 2023

EXAMINATION BOARD

Chair :

Prof. Assia KACED,
University of Algiers II, Faculty of Foreign Languages.

Supervisor :

Prof. *M'hamed BENSEMMANE*,
University of Algiers II, Faculty of Foreign Languages.

Internal Examiner :

Dr. Fatima AZZOUG,
University of Algiers II, Faculty of Foreign Languages.

External Examiner :

Dr. Mohamed CHABANE ALI,
University of Blida II

External Examiner :

Dr. Fethi HADDOUCHE,
University of Blida II

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my own investigation and that due reference or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

I am duly informed that any person practicing plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary sanctions issued by university authorities under the rules and regulations in force.

Date: March 2023

Signature: Ms Amina BEZZAZI

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my dear father, who taught me the invaluable benefits of patience and hard work, and who never ceased believing in me.

To my dear mother, who injected in me the love for books and literature at a very early age, and without whose unconditional love, boundless abnegation, and constant support this work would never have come to life.

As ever, to my source of strength, my brother; my source of hope, my late grandparents; and my source of light, my son... that ray of light which beams in the darkest nights.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, *Prof. M'hamed Bensemmane*, for his invaluable help, his precious comments on my research, his useful remarks, and his guidance all through the process of writing this thesis. His inexhaustible knowledge of letters, from which I learned countless things, has always been a source of inspiration for me. Therefore, this work owes a lot to him.

Particular thanks are addressed to *Dr. Nesrine Bessaï-Aoudjit* and *Prof. Assia Kaced* for offering me their precious assistance and lending me their magnanimous hand when I needed it most. I am much thankful for their kind help, advice, and encouragements to hold on whatever the conditions. To them, I would like to express my profound gratitude for the so many ways in which they gave me support. My very warm thanks go as well to *Prof. Faiza Bensemmane* for her constant support, valuable advice and encouragements when I needed them most. I am much grateful to her for her assistance and presence. I am equally grateful to *Prof. Kamel Khaldi* for all the guidance and helpfulness he offered me ever since I started teaching in the Department of English.

My gratefulness is also addressed to all the people who, in a way or in another, have supported me, advised me and helped me. These include precious friends, colleagues, and staff members of the Department of English, Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Algiers II- Abou el Kacem Sâadallah.

Last but certainly not least, my deepest gratitude and love go to my family for having been there when I needed them most and for their patience with me all through my research process.

ABSTRACT

The present research work deals comparatively with the representation of rural and urban environments in a set of realistic and naturalistic novels from American and Anglophone African literatures. The corpus of study for American literature consists of Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893), Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900), Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906), and Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* (1920). The selection of texts from Anglophone African literature are Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948- South-Africa), Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* (1960- Nigeria), Cyprian Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana* (1961- Nigeria), and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (1977- Kenya).

The primary focus of this research is the binary countryside-city, or province-metropolis, including an examination of the representation of each part's most significant components, namely the milieu (space and atmosphere) and its inhabitants.

The rural environment dealt with here in both literatures is the pastoral agrarian milieu, that is, the small town with farm lands as well as its people. The provincial regions under focus in the American texts are Columbia City, Wisconsin (*Sister Carrie*), the rural suburbs of Chicago (*The Jungle*), and Gopher Prairie, Minnesota (*Main Street*). Since *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* is primarily a short novel dealing exclusively with the city, that is, New York –as its subtitle indicates, *A Story of New York*–, it is, therefore, excluded from our study of the province. Concerning the rural regions under examination in the selected African literary works, they are the village of Ilmorog (later transformed into New Ilmorog), in north-central Kenya (*Petals of Blood*); Ndotsheni village in the province of Natal (Ixopo), in eastern South Africa (*Cry, the Beloved Country*); Bagana, the home town of Freddie Namme, as well as Ogabu, the native eastern Nigeria village of Jagua (*Jagua Nana*); and Obi's native village of Umuofia, in Nigeria (*No Longer at Ease*). As to the metropolitan environment treated in both literatures, it consists of the modern City, with its component elements –including its dwellers– and its predominant capitalist aspects among which are commerce, industrialisation, and consumerism. In our American literary corpus, the cities on the spotlight are Chicago (*Sister Carrie* and *The Jungle*), New York City (*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*) and Washington (*Main Street*). In the selected African texts, light will be cast on Lagos City in Nigeria (*No Longer at Ease* and *Jagua Nana*), Nairobi in Kenya (*Petals of Blood*) and Johannesburg in South Africa (*Cry, the Beloved Country*).

This research work makes of its prime concern an examination of the ways in which the countryside and the metropolis are portrayed in novels set in an urbanised, a modern, and a highly-industrialised context characterised by individualism, materialism, secularism and fragmentation (both human, temporal and spatial). It is, therefore, of interest to shed light on the place of the Pastoral in an age where industry

flagrantly supersedes agriculture, and modernity wins over tradition. As a logical outcome of massive industrialisation and urbanisation, considerably facilitated by significant means of transportation (such as the Machine –or the train– and the railway), the deterioration of the province is inevitable despite its desperate struggle with the overwhelming capitalist forces. The African and the American novelists of our corpus deal with the issue of the countryside's marginalisation and the rise of the city as an alternative frontier in more or less the same way given the fact that the transition from rurality to urbanism corresponds to the age of realistic and naturalistic literary production whose most prominent figures either critiqued the fast-growing industrial business or fiercely denounced its irreversible effects on the disappearing provincial –and traditional– traits. This is not only the case of American muckraking authors and of the much committed and socially-concerned African ones but also and mainly of their French realist and naturalist predecessors (Honoré de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, and Emile Zola) who have, to a great extent, influenced their texts at least thematically and stylistically. Just like in Europe, the corruption resulting from the rather chaotic laissez-faire capitalist policy in America and Africa can thus be visible in the province, the metropolis, and their respective inhabitants, to the extent of affecting seriously their psychological state and general behaviour. Overcoming such effects becomes a question of survival for the individual, be it in the province or in the metropolis.

In the light of American and African history on one hand, and the theory of influence and intertextuality which allows us to evaluate the legacy of Flaubert and Zola outside the European frontiers on the other hand, this research work attempts to explain –by means of a textual, intertextual and historicist approach– the points of convergence and divergence in the representation of the countryside and the city by the selected African and American authors, as well as the reasons behind such depiction of a long-existing dichotomy.

Keywords: Interdisciplinarity, History, Literature, Intertextuality, Influence, Realism, Naturalism, rural environment, urban environment, countryside, city, train, railway, capitalism, neo-colonial, idealism, Bovarysm, ennui, alienation.

Contents

Title Page p.ii

Examination Board p.iii

Declaration p.iv

Dedication p.v

Acknowledgements p.vi

Abstract p.vii

Contents p.ix

List of Abbreviations p.xi

Introduction p.1

Chapter One: Theoretical Reflections p.30

A- **Realism and Naturalism: American and African Perspectives in Literature p.36**

B- **Influence and Intertextuality: The Connection with Europe p.53**

C- **Rural and Urban Environments in African and American Realistic and Naturalistic Fictions p.91**

Chapter Two: The Countryside and the Forgotten Past p.108

A- **The Countryside: This "Ragged Edge of the Universe" p.112**

B- The "Machine in the Garden": A Tempting Snake or a "Celestial Railroad"? p.123

C- The Waste Land: The Pastoral as "Ashland" p.169

Chapter Three: The City: A Place of Virtue or Vice? p.185

A- Voice(s) of the City: The Lure of the Mermaids p.189

B- "Something Is Rotten" in the Urban Kingdom: The 'Walled City' or the Urban Jungle as a World Upside Down p.230

C- "The Call of the Wild": Nostalgia and the 'Quest West for Walden' p.246

Chapter Four: Country People and City People: A Comparative View p.260

A- Country People and City People: The 'Moths of the Lamp' and the Incandescent Glow p.263

B- The 'Not-so-Fallen' Woman: The Figure of the Prostitute in Realistic and Naturalistic Urban Fiction p.278

C- The Idealist: The Impossible Dreamer and the Pragmatic Dreamer, between Bovarysm and Alienation p.287

Conclusion p.308

Bibliography p.315

Appendix p.348

Abstract in Arabic p.351

List of Abbreviations

MB: Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert *(1857)*

Maggie: Maggie: A Girl of the Streets by Stephen Crane *(1893)*

SC: Sister Carrie by Theodore Dreiser *(1900)*

TJ: The Jungle by Upton Sinclair *(1906)*

MS: Main Street by Sinclair Lewis *(1920)*

CBC: Cry, the Beloved Country by Alan Paton *(1948)*

JN: Jagua Nana by Cyprian Ekwensi *(1960)*

NLE: No Longer at Ease by Chinua Achebe *(1961)*

PB: Petals of Blood by Ngugi wa Thiong'o *(1977)*

INTRODUCTION

The present research work is a comparative study, dealing with rural and urban environments in selected realist and naturalist American and Anglophone African novels. The focus will be on eight novels, four for each literature. The American novels selected are Stephen Crane's (1871-1900) *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893), Theodore Dreiser's (1871-1945) *Sister Carrie* (1900), Upton Sinclair's (1878-1968) *The Jungle* (1906), and Sinclair Lewis's (1885-1951) *Main Street* (1920). The African novels chosen are the South African Alan Paton's (1903-1988) *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948), the Nigerian Chinua Achebe's (1930-2013) *No Longer at Ease* (1960), the Nigerian Cyprian Ekwensi's (1921-2007) *Jagua Nana* (1961), and the Kenyan Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1938--) *Petals of Blood* (1977).

What is considered here is how the dichotomy countryside-city is represented and dealt with in such works. The rural environment refers to the twentieth-century American and African countryside with everything it implies: farms, traditional small towns and land with its 'natural' aspect. The country regions and towns that will be focused on in the American novels are Columbia City in Wisconsin (*Sister Carrie*), the Prairie plains surrounding Chicago (*The Jungle*), and Gopher Prairie in Minnesota (*Main Street*). There is no mention of the countryside in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* since it is a short novel dealing exclusively with the city, that is, New York –as indicated in its subtitle, *A Story of New York*. As for the countryside regions that will be dealt with in the African novels, they consist of the village of Ilmorog, in north-central Kenya (*Petals of Blood*); the village of Ndotsheni in the Natal province (Ixopo region), in eastern South Africa (*Cry, the Beloved Country*); Bagana, the home village of Freddie Namme, as well as Ogabu, the

native town of Jagua (*Jagua Nana*); and Obi Okonkwo's ancestral village of Iguedo, Umuofia, in Nigeria (*No Longer at Ease*). In contrast, the urban environment refers to the twentieth-century American and African city, or the metropolis, with all the elements characterising it, namely the capitalist system (with its aspects of industrialisation, commerce and consumerism) and modernity. In the American novels previously mentioned, the main cities that will be dealt with are Chicago (*Sister Carrie* and *The Jungle*), New York City (*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*) and Washington (*Main Street*). The major African cities under study are Lagos City in Nigeria (*No Longer at Ease* and *Jagua Nana*), Nairobi in Kenya (*Petals of Blood*) and Johannesburg in South Africa (*Cry, the Beloved Country*).

The choice of these works of fiction is based on the fact that their authors devote considerable space to the close depiction of the duality countryside-city in the twentieth-century American and African context. The topic itself has arisen from a personal interest in the natural and rural environment, having noted the overwhelming presence of the countryside in most of the American and African works of fiction of the twentieth-century. Thus, my aim is to examine the ways in which both the country and the city are represented, bearing in mind two important facts. First, Nature, not only in its virgin but also –and mostly– in its rural or pastoral aspect, plays a key role in American and African histories. However, its great significance is being challenged by the city, the urban environment which is gradually taking over natural landscapes in the twentieth-century –modern– context. Secondly, many similarities in the depiction of the state of the countryside and the city existing in the eight novels, concerning the themes and the

writers' styles, have drawn my attention despite the seemingly different historical –social, cultural and economic– background. The countryside, for one thing, is portrayed in a state of decay or degradation in all the novels under study. Likewise, the urban environment is a 'jungle' in the complete Darwinian sense of the term. This is the very reason why, arguably, the present topic constitutes an interesting ground for investigation.

The research questions which frame this study and to which I hope to give consistent answers revolve around many points: how are the countryside and the city depicted in two different continents and different countries namely, the USA (a developed, 'imperialist-oriented' superpower) and Africa, as represented by Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa (developing, 'newly' independent nations)? How is the dichotomy countryside-city dealt with by authors having different backgrounds, ways of thinking, traditions and literary inclinations in the same period of time, that is, the twentieth-century? What are the writers' major motivations and aims treating such a dichotomy in a century when America and Africa witnessed major historical changes (economic, social and political) the most important of which is the capitalist system, whose means (modernity, commerce, industrialisation and consumerism) inevitably led to the receding move of the countryside and the rapid advent of the city? And finally, what could be the reasons for the striking similarities and the existing differences in the representation of both elements in terms of the themes and the writers' styles and modes of writing?

The aim of the present research work is indeed to focus on the similarities in the representation of rural and urban environments by Anglophone African novelists and 'white' American novelists despite the apparent and inherent differences in the geographical, historical (spatio-temporal), cultural, and literary backgrounds. This would imply an examination of the external and internal factors of change described, and a consideration of the differences/similarities in the aspects of the two literary traditions in terms of style and purpose –that is, art-for-art's sake or committed literature. This may help us understand how far the African and American novels under study are similar in terms of their realistic/naturalistic contents.

This research work is mostly centred around a comparative study between American and African literatures, but it also builds a bridge with the predecessors of realism and naturalism in Europe, namely with French authors Gustave Flaubert and Emile Zola. Indeed, it is of interest to study their influence on writers outside Europe. We shall put forward concrete evidence of Zola's presence in the African and American novels selected, and examine how far they borrow from the *Rougon-Macquart* cycle. Have they taken Zola's naturalism further? If they have, what is the added value that can be noted? For instance, is Dreiser's 'Barbaric naturalism' (using the words of Stuart Pratt Sherman) akin to Zola's 'stinky' naturalism (to cite Ferragus in his correspondence with Zola in *Le Figaro*, January 1868)? Are they both 'Saboteurs of the Status Quo' (to cite Clare Virginia Eby's *Dreiser and Veblen, Saboteurs of the Status Quo*)? An attempt will be made to demonstrate the extent to which the novels of the corpus are Zolaesque, at least stylistically and thematically. But prior to that, it would be interesting to trace the

corpus novels to Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and investigate how far they can be considered echoes of this realistic classic. Ferragus (Louis Ulbach) declares, in 'La Littérature putride' –his well-known attack against Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* published in *Le Figaro*, in January 1868–, that *MB* is *the* original and that all the novels issued after it were nothing but pale copies of it. Though his view is radical, it bears a relative truth. Not only are there links with Flaubert and Zola, but the presence of Balzac is also undeniable. What is at the heart of the focus is the level at which the novels of the corpus mirror these French classics of realism and naturalism.

David Lodge's explanation of influence as a natural and logical process is of significant relevance to our problematic and our study:

> It is of course impossible to write anything without being influenced. Nobody ever wrote a novel or a poem or an essay without having read at least one and more probably hundreds of such works by others. Most creative writers were voracious readers in their childhood and youth, and most began themselves by imitating and emulating, consciously or unconsciously, the writers they admired. Literary influence is therefore inevitable.'
> (…) The American critic Harold Bloom coined the phrase 'the anxiety of influence', in a book of that title published in 1973, to signify this ambivalent attitude of the modern writer towards his precursors.[1]

It is needless to insist that the theory of influence and intertextuality (with, sometimes, instances of intra-intertextuality) is of primary importance in our examination of the

[1] David Lodge. 'Graham Greene and the Anxiety of Influence' in *The Year of Henry James*. London: Harvill Secker, 2006 (Random House ebooks, 2014). p.134. (pp.134-147)

selected corpus and its tight relation with the French realists and naturalists aforementioned.

In my attempt to give answers to the questions above, many aspects of the works will be dealt with in relation to the narratives adopted by each novelist. One of the main ideas that can be extracted from the reading of the novels is the universality of the major theme of the countryside-city struggle and the life-long existence of this dichotomy. Though with relatively different degrees, the eight authors display a deep concern for the state of devaluation of the countryside and the corrupt aspect of the city, whatever their viewpoints or their state of mind on the issue. For both American and African writers, as represented by the novels under study, the rural environment is an important component part of their culture and their history, while the urban environment is the 'grotesque' substitute for the countryside. For the majority of the writers dealt with here, the rural environment, though in a state of astounding decay, still bears the notions of the 'protective hands of a tender mother' (Mother Nature's embrace), the 'motherland', or simply 'home'; that is, the rural environment stands for independence, freedom, power, tradition and the very *identity* of the country. Thus, the viewpoint of the authors –whether they are native Africans or American-born with European descent– on the state of the countryside and its substitution by the city is relatively the same if one has to consider some similar historical facts. The African countries represented here (Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa) are newly independent countries, formerly colonised by Britain; similarly, the USA, a new nation of about three centuries and a half, was a former British colony

and got its independence in the eighteenth-century. It would be logical that one can thus guess the importance of *land* for a formerly colonised country.

Another striking similarity in the themes recurrent in the novels under study and which is in relation to the countryside-city dilemma is the theme of idealism as to a better future in an urban world though the writers are quite realistic; they are aware of the inability to change the inevitable: the domination of the urban environment in the twentieth century and the overwhelming presence of the metropolis. This idealism is partly reflected in the characters' 'pastoral impulse', or the return to the countryside, which is but a temporary solution for their problems since aspects of modernity reached the most remote parts of the rural areas. In short, the dominating idea that can be derived from the eight authors' depiction of the countryside and the city in their novels, in the twentieth century African and American context, is that they are aware that the countryside is part and parcel of their history but they cannot deny the presence of the city, whether they stand harshly against it (Crane, Lewis, Sinclair, Paton and Ngugi) or whether they are against its rise but still accept it as a new, although corrupt, environment (Ekwensi, Achebe and Dreiser).

Due to the tight relation between text and context, our approach, based mainly on Textuality (or the focus on form, to cite John Sutherland in his *50 Literature Ideas You Really Need to Know*), is eclectic. The study is not comparative exclusively from the point of view of the literary works selected here; it does also try to compare the authors of these works as literary 'institutions'. We consider the thought of the Formalists and the New Critics on the absolute independence of the literary text from its author slightly unfair to

the former in the sense that it deprives it of its literary creator who, in many ways, may have played an important role in shaping his creation. Just like the theory of (any) creation, the genesis of literary creation has a cause. The Big Bang theory of literary creation and writing involves reasons behind the use of a specific word instead of another, the absence of certain terms, and these reasons can very often be traced back to the author, their life or biography, and their background. Therefore, given the utility of referring to the creators' biographies, our approach in dealing with the text will not be one-sided, that is only formalist or New Critic-based. It will have recourse to other theories of literature without, of course, neglecting the text itself.

Four main chapters constitute the core content of the present research work. The first chapter aims to discuss the main concepts, notions and myths recurrent in the eight novels, to explain the main theory used to substantiate the treatment of the topic, and to cast light on the writers' styles and modes of writing. The second chapter deals with the importance of the countryside for the main characters, the gradual lack of interest in the rural environment seen in the main characters' departure for the city, the features of country people, and the return to the countryside as a place of refuge from urban injustices. The third chapter treats the city as the heart of capitalism and success but also as the locus of social evils, the features of the city as the embodiment of vice (corruption, social class injustices, exploitation), and the features of city people in such an 'urban jungle'. It also tackles the city dwellers' impulse to go back to the countryside after an unhappy urban experience. The last chapter is a comparative study between country people and city people, with a particular focus on the figure of the valueless farmer and

the prostitute, as well as the rural and urban environments in relation to the American Dream and Afrotopia. It tries to show too the gradual transformation of utopia into dystopia, or the failure of people's dreams and the collapse or disintegration of their 'excessive' idealism mainly due to the capitalist system and colonisation. The chapter deals with the authors' idealism as well and tries to examine the extent to which each can be considered as a romantic naturalist or a typical idealist.

It is important, before examining the authors' depiction of the countryside-city dichotomy, to clarify the main notions, concepts and myths –in relation to the topic– used in the novels under study, as well as to explain the theoretical background supporting the main ideas and highlight the writers' styles and modes of writing. The American Dream and Afrotopia seem to be the most frequently used notions in relation to the countryside and the city in the novels under study. On the surface, the two notions seem different, the American Dream being the strong desire of Americans and the immigrants of America to improve their situation through hard work and Afrotopia being an irresistible urge for Africans to free themselves from colonial domination, and when independent, from the 'miserable' impacts of colonisation, including the 'ravages' of the capitalist system and the 'oppressive' character of neo-colonialism. The two dreams as seen in the eight novels, have a common core: they both bear a strong will to change the current situation into a better one. And given the twentieth century American and African context (the devaluation of the countryside and the rapid advent of the city, the firm establishment of capitalism, the irremediably 'chaotic' postcolonial/post-independence situation), the two dreams are but the embodiment of a 'still born' idealism. Obi, Freddie and Jagua, Stephen

Kumalo, Wanja and her three lovers, Hurstwood, Jurgis, Maggie, Carrie and Carol Kennicott all have dreams of change for the better; nevertheless, none of them (though to a lesser extent, Carrie) succeeds in bringing to life his/her idealism mainly due to the devaluation of the rural small-town life (once, the symbol of purity, welfare and freedom) and the corrupting influence of the city.

Another important notion, whose use through the dominant themes is recurrent, is that of Darwinism. The latter, together with the notion of determinism, characterises the main characters' socio-economic and hereditary environment whose superior forces simply crash down their will for change, an idea which creates an appropriate background that prepares the reader for their inevitable failure. Thus, in an unfamiliar, changing rural area and a strange and 'dehumanising' urban region, Obi, Jagua, Absalom Kumalo, Wanja and her three lovers, George Hurstwood, Jurgis, Maggie, Carrie (before her later access to a higher social position), and Carol (though with a different degree) are doomed to fail. Close to this Darwinian philosophy is the 'urban jungle' notion referring to the 'competitive' aspect of the metropolis in which only the fittest survives. All of Lagos City, Nairobi, Johannesburg, Chicago, New York and Washington are 'urban jungles'.

Adding to these notions, the 'Mother Nature' metaphor is quite present in the novels under study. It refers not only to virgin land but also and mainly to the pastoral areas where small-town life still has the 'shadow' of the purity it once had, before the rapid advent of the city. For the main characters of the eight novels, the pastoral regions are plain, yet they are a refuge, though temporarily, from the city's evils, an exception is made for Carrie.

The main myths dealt with by the eight novelists are the Myth of Nature and the Success Myth. The first one, known for the Americans as the Frontier Myth, refers to both the virgin and the pastoral lands. The importance of this myth is clear in the novels since Nature, virgin or pastoral, is part and parcel of American and African history and traditions. Given the current urban context, this myth is shown by the authors as a 'fading' element since both virgin and pastoral lands are being challenged by the city's presence. Its importance is present only in the 'memory' of almost all the main characters, whose idealism leads them to go back to their country regions in an attempt to flee city life, where another myth, the Success Myth, motivates its dwellers. The Success Myth, originally attributed to Jazz Age Americans, characterises people of the city and people heading to the city in search of money and 'glitter' whatever the means. Therefore, it can be considered as the antithesis of the original American Dream and Afrotopia.

Concerning the theoretical tenets that will support the claims of this study, eclecticism will be dominant both intrinsically and extrinsically. One point needs to be specified about textuality[2] in this research, though. The study is not comparative exclusively from the point of view of the literary works selected here; it does also try to compare the authors of these works as literary 'institutions'. We consider the thought of the Formalists and the New Critics on the absolute independence of the literary text from its author slightly unfair to the former in the sense that it deprives it of its literary creator who, in many ways, may have played an important role in shaping his creation. Just like

[2] John Sutherland, *50 Literature IdeasYou Really Need to Know.*

the theory of (any) creation, the genesis of literary creation has a cause. The Big Bang theory of literary creation and writing involves reasons behind the use of a specific word instead of another, the absence of certain terms, and these reasons can very often be traced back to the authors, their life or biography, and their background. Therefore, given the utility of referring to the creators' biographies, our approach in dealing with the text will not be one-sided, that is only formalist or New Critic-based. It will have recourse to other theories of literature without, of course, getting away from the text itself.

This being said, the emphasis will be put on the novels themselves (which is one principle of New Criticism), that is, the writers' styles, language, symbolism and modes of writing. Another point of the New Criticism's approach to literary texts that I shall make use of is their 'reliance on 'imagery' as a concept with which to define form'[3] and their use of the literary image as 'the primary material or constituent of form itself.'[4] Thus, importance will be given to the symbols and images, used by the authors under study, in relation to the countryside and the city. Nevertheless, the use of the textual approach will not be exclusive since the extrinsic approach will also be useful. Here, by extrinsic I mean historical. Indeed, though traditional, Historicism is 'a view of literature which sees it primarily as a series of works arranged in a chronological order and as integral parts of the historical process.'[5] That is, the eight novels under study can be regarded as part and parcel of the history that helped shape them and which, in their turn, they have the duty to reflect. Reference, thus, will be made to major twentieth century

[3] Robert Con. Davis & Ronald Schleifer, 'What is Literary Studies?', in Robert Con. Davis & Ronald Schleifer, (eds.), *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, p.29.
[4] Robert Con. Davis & Ronald Schleifer, Ibid.
[5] René Wellek & Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, chapter 4, p.39.

historical events both in America and Africa to explain the authors' representation of the countryside and the city as well as to understand the reasons behind their dealing with the actual dichotomy. Hippolyte Taine says, in this sense, that 'because history produces or determines the shape and content of literature, the study of literature must first be a study of history, the virtual master text.'[6]

As part of the extrinsic approach we intend to adopt for the study of the corpus novels and the key themes inherent in them is the very significant theory of influence and intertextuality (with instances of intra-intertextuality in some novels). Indeed, we will try to provide evidence of the very close tie between French realism and naturalism and the selected corpus. This is basically based on Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence*, Julia Kristeva's definition of the term and the process of 'intertextuality', and the works of Mikhail Bakhtin, namely *The Dialogic Imagination* and his notion of the 'polyphonic novel' in his noteworthy *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*. David Lodge provides a clear definition of the process of influence and intertextuality in literary studies, as stated earlier on in this introduction.

Three secondary theories will be used in addition to textuality and Historicism. The Marxist approach, through its representative literary figures Raymond Williams and Fredric Jameson, will be dealt with mainly to help clarify the depiction of the African and American novelists under study of the lower class conditions of life mainly in the city as illustrated by Jurgis, the Johnsons (Maggie's parents), the Hansons (Carrie's sister and brother-in-law) and almost all the female characters leading a 'bad' life in the city to

[6] Robert Con. Davis & Ronald Schleifer, *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, part 7, p.458.

make a living. Jameson and Williams give this Marxist philosophy even a broader dimension linking it to psychoanalysis. Indeed, both claim that the urban capitalist environment 'dehumanises' the individual, giving him the constant feeling he is a stranger, an outcast. This is what Williams calls 'urban alienation', that Jameson goes as far as to give it the term 'schizophrenia', caused by the capitalist system. The socio-cultural critical approach based on Thorstein Veblen's 'theory of the leisure class' and its two principles of 'conspicuous leisure' and 'conspicuous consumption' will be useful to explain the excessive consumerist tendency of city people namely, those of the upper class in Chicago, New York and Washington, and the new elite of Lagos City, Nairobi and Johannesburg.

As regards the writers' modes of writing[7], they represent a key element in understanding how they treated the countryside and the city. Indeed, Social Realism, which is the mode of writing adopted by the African novelists (Achebe, Ekwensi, Ngugi and Paton), and Naturalism, which is adopted by the American novelists (Dreiser, Crane, Sinclair and to some extent Lewis since he is a socially engaged writer) determine the way the writers handle the themes in relation to the two elements of the topic as well as their styles and tones.

The common feature between Social Realism and Naturalism is the element of 'protest', of 'denunciation', even if the degree of 'protest' varies from one writer to another according to their ways of thinking, biographies and political tendencies. Achebe, Ekwensi, Paton and Ngugi make use of Social Realism to deplore the changes affecting

[7]The term is borrowed from David Lodge's *The Modes of Modern Writing* (1977, 2015).

the countryside (symbol of tradition, religious faith, the ‘homeland’) and the city (a ‘rotten’ place) attributed to the effects of colonisation in post-independence Africa as well as to the capitalist system. A harsher denunciation characterises the Naturalist novels of Crane, Dreiser, Sinclair and Lewis. In fact, all of them stand firmly against the devaluation of the countryside by the capitalist system and its main aspect of industrialisation, as well as its substitution by the very heart of capitalism, the ‘corrupt’ city. The element of determinism, closely linked to Naturalism as an extreme form of Realism, also characterises the eight novels under study and help render the ‘chaotic’ and jungle-like aspects of the metropolis.

The styles of the writers are quite shaped and influenced by their modes of writing. Indeed, since the novelists adopt Social Realism and Naturalism, their works are mainly social satires full of symbolism and irony. Achebe, Ekwensi, Ngugi and Paton make use of satire to mock the behaviour of the new elite of natives in the city as well as at the ‘out-dated’ rural traditions and hypocritical religion –quite incompatible with the metropolitan context– in the same way Dreiser, Crane, Sinclair and Lewis make use of satire to point out the irrelevance of country values and religion in the given modern context, and the excessive show of luxury of the leisure class in the city. The irony used by the authors in the eight novels is closely related to satire and determinism in the sense that it is part of the derisive tone of the authors and it is mainly an irony of fate when the idealism of such characters as Obi, Jurgis, Carol, Maggie and Stephen Kumalo is met with an inevitable failure. To help render this atmosphere or tone of ‘protest’ and ‘discontent’, the writers use local colour language fitting the social class their characters belong to. Freddie and

Jagua speak pidgin English while Obi wavers between English and Ibo due to, respectively, their need to get rid of their tribal customs and the influence of foreign education, being a member of the Nigerian new elite. The city, Lagos, is no place for the Ibo rural tradition and the 'rule' compels its dwellers to adopt a new lifestyle which includes the sine qua non condition of using the coloniser's language to get access to a higher social position and thus gain esteem. The Johnsons (Maggie's family) speak American English quite typical of the New York Bowery district (slums). Jurgis and his family of immigrants speak a language which mixes English and Lithuanian, the latter being their mother tongue. And the Hurstwoods' English is much of the sophisticated way of speaking of Chicago's aristocracy. The writers, in their dealing with the major themes in relation to the topic, make use of a technique characterising Social Realist and Naturalist writings which is the extensive use of details. In their efforts of depicting rural and urban realities as they are, mostly in their 'negative' aspect, importance is given even to the slightest, 'unimportant' details by the authors. In short, the writers' modes of writing allow them to 'protest' against and denounce, in various degrees, the causes of 'change', mainly 'negative' change, both in society and in the life of the individual, whether he lives in a rural or in an urban environment. All of them stand against the forces of change: African writers point at colonisation with its devastating aftermath while the Americans denounce capitalism and its chaotic laissez-faire policy.

The first element of the topic, namely the countryside, will be dealt with in relation to its gradual degradation in the eight novels under study. That is why the first part to be developed in a further research is entitled 'The Countryside Marginalised'.

In fact, in the novels under study, even if the writers stress the state of degradation they observe in the countryside, there are examples in which the rural environment is painted as a place that still has some of its 'pure' virginal aspects. Together with Henry Nash Smith and Frederick Jackson Turner, who stress the importance of the Western Frontier (virgin and mainly pastoral lands) in American history, Emmanuel Obiechina points at the significance of Nature (rural areas) in West African literature, its 'divine' aspect and 'hidden' powers. Ilmorog (Kenya), Umofia (Nigeria), Ndotsheni (South Africa), Gopher Prairie (Minnesota), the Chicago countryside region and Columbia City (Wisconsin) are all rural areas closely related to family (parents), tradition, purity, home, morality, religion and stability. The remaining purity of the countryside is sometimes embodied by some female characters like Wanja's grandmother, Nyakinyua, Hannah Okonkwo (Obi's mother) and the Lithuanian immigrant Teta Elzbieta. This idea recalls much of the 'Mother Nature's tender embrace' metaphor. Carrie leaves for Chicago 'fresh from the air of the village, the light of the country still in her eye' and she has 'neither guile nor rapacity.'[8] This depiction of the countryside can be related to the writers' influence by the historical context in which their novels were written, a period marked by the clear progress of the city and the receding attraction of pastoral regions. We can note that some African and American writers, through their characters, feel nostalgia for the

[8] Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, chapter 14, p.122.

land, which is, for them, a symbol of power, identity (mainly cultural) and which gives them a sense of national belonging (due to the fact that both America and Africa were formerly colonised by Britain).

The writers, however, devote an important space in their novels to the close depiction of the clash opposing tradition, as represented by rural areas, and modernity, as represented by the city. Here again, the relation with the historical context is worth mentioning. The country-city parallel and the tradition-modernity clash are best illustrated in *Jagua Nana*, *Petals of Blood*, *Cry, the Beloved Country*, and *Main Street*.

The twentieth century is a century in which capitalism dominates every aspect of life of people, whether they are in Africa or in America. And even if the traditional pastoral town resists changes –as seen in the novels–, capitalism, by means of its main tools (modernity, industrialisation, trade, consumerism), progresses even in the farthest rural regions, bringing thus many changes to them. The Umofia Progressive Union and Hannah Okonkwo, both standing for tribal rural traditions, are reluctant to changes and progress but their struggle in keeping the purity of the past, including the purity and moral values of the rural Umofia village, is vain due to the development of Lagos, with its Westernised lifestyle and overall industrialised aspect. The isolated pastoral region of Ilmorog and the small Midwestern town of Gopher Prairie are both caught up by progress due to, respectively, the building of the Trans-Africa road increasing trade and the massive introduction of the automobile. As Munira says in *Petals of Blood*, ‘it was New

Kenya. It was New Ilmorog. Nothing was free.'[9] The pastoral village of Ndotsheni in South Africa and the rural Columbia City in Wisconsin are characterised by a 'dull' and 'ugly' aspect. Thus, in comparison with all that the city can offer its people, country characters (Carol, Carrie, Gertrude and Absalom Kumalo, Karega and Wanja, Freddie and Jagua) consider their rural region to be 'the ragged edge of the universe.'[10]

Here, the authors, in the eight novels, tackle an important twentieth century issue characterising both American and African societies: the marginalisation of the countryside by its people and their subsequent leave for the big city, the place of opportunity. Growing disillusioned by country life, Carol, Carrie, Absalom and Gertrude, Karega and Wanja, Freddie and Jagua, leave their rural places to go to the city in search of a better life. Therefore, the idea of *devaluation* emerges: the devaluation of rural land and its people. It is important to cast light on the change affecting country people due to the invasion of capitalism in rural regions. It is true that they are pious, moral, simple people but they turn out to be amazingly materialistic given the new 'competitive' economic situation, a point hinting at the growing hypocrisy of religion. And one common feature typical of country people leaving for the city, as seen in the novels under study, is that they turn out to be corrupt (either for survival's sake or to climb the social ladder) under the influence of urban conditions. Prostitution, a clear sign of moral corruption, is present in the countryside through the character of Wanja and her own brothel, although unhappy circumstances often push women to such behaviours.

---

[9] Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood*, (Oxford: Heinemann, 1986.), p.280.
[10] Francis Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, chapter 1, p.9.

The authors' viewpoint on the devaluation of the countryside can clearly be seen in the notion of the 'pastoral impulse'. Indeed, the writers point at the degradation of the countryside and the disillusion of country characters with rural life, so that they end up leaving for the metropolis. Nevertheless, city life is not that better since some of them go back to their rural villages; an indication that the writers are more rural-oriented than urban-inclined, with the exception of Dreiser, who wavers between the two attitudes due to the paradox of his former poverty background and his mission and writing style as a Naturalist. Bob Ames (the intellectual character Carrie is fascinated by), Absalom's pregnant girlfriend, Karega and Wanja, Carol and Jurgis withdraw to their country villages in a desperate search of morality, purity and peace. Though this point shows the optimistic touch of the writers, what is clearly mentioned in their novels is that the pastoral impulse turns out to be a temporary solution to their city problems, since change for the worse inevitably affects the rural regions and the city starts 'to encroach upon and finally swallow the traditional and the rural.'[11]

The next point to be developed further concerns the urban environment, as portrayed by the eight novelists, and which is a place of both success and failure. Johannesburg, Lagos City, Nairobi, Chicago, New York and Washington are all images of the typical capitalist metropolis where dreams can become a reality. Different aspects of modernity, as existing in the twentieth century city, are depicted in the novels: new buildings, transportation means, shops, restaurants, breweries and hotels. The common image of the city, however, is that it is the centre of various social evils, namely

[11]Patrick Williams, *Ngugi Wa Thiong'o*, p.82.

corruption, the loss of moral values (prostitution and adultery), racism and crime (bribery, robbery, murder). All of the novels under study carry denunciations of the causes of such urban degradation. They all point at the capitalist system as the culprit for such changes. Crane, Sinclair, Dreiser and Lewis, being Naturalists or socially engaged writers, have Socialist and Marxist tendencies. Paton, Achebe, Ekwensi and Ngugi, being Social Realists, adopt a postcolonial discourse also influenced by Marx and Fanon. The former denounce the capitalist system for ruining the American society by allowing the city to be the stronghold of all vices. The latter denounce colonialism and mainly its aftermath (neo-colonialism) also characterised by the importation and the establishment of capitalism which allowed the rise of the city as a corrupt environment.

For instance, corruption, in the eight novels, concerns all social spheres, the lower and the higher classes: the industrialists of New Ilmorog and the politicians in Nairobi (Kimeria, Chui, Nderi and the Ilmorog MP), politicians and simple workers in Lagos (some UPU members, Sam Okoli), politicians and simple workers in Johannesburg (John Kumalo), industrialists and politicians in Chicago (Hannah and Hogg, Phil Connor and Mike Scully) and industrialists in New York. This corruption is mainly caused by the 'fierce competition' the capitalist system engenders, as depicted by the writers. African writers give this issue a postcolonial dimension:

> 'times of great uncertainty and change seem to encourage materialism. Men try to attain the psychological security which the social context of their

> time denies them by creating a little charmed island for themselves.'[12]

In a way, colonisation's inevitable outcome is corruption since the formerly colonised, in a capitalist era, are 'compelled' to 'survive', whatever the means.

Adding to racism, which is directed towards natives in the African novels and to immigrants in the American ones, morality is another 'urban' issue. As said, prostitution in the city is a recurrent issue dealt with, and the writers narrate how many female characters (including country women going to the city) make their living out of it, namely Wanja, Gertrude Kumalo, Jagua, Marija and Maggie. Other female and male characters lead an immoral life (Carrie, Absalom's girlfriend, John Kumalo and Clara).

Finally, crime is another urban social evil. It includes rape (Kimeria, Phil Connor), robbery and theft (Absalom and Gertrude Kumalo, Maggie and Jimmy Johnson), and murder (Karega, Munira, Wanja, Abdullah, and Absalom). Here again, crime is attributed to natives in the African novels (Gertrude and Absalom Kumalo, Munira, Karega, Abdullah, Wanja, and Obi) and to working class characters and immigrants (Jurgis) in the American ones (Maggie and Jimmy Johnson, Jurgis). Alan Paton confirms this fact saying that 'the criminals who commit these serious crimes are for the most part natives.'[13]

Together with the depiction of city people in their novels, the authors deal with the emergence of new social classes arising from capitalism and colonisation, being the factor bringing the capitalist system to Africa. The Upper Middle class emerges as a new

---

[12] Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of the Igbo People*, p.149.
[13] Alan Paton, 'Who Is Really to Blame for the Crime Wave in South Africa?', p.7.

class of businessmen, adding to the aristocrats and the lower class or proletariat in the American novels; while the New Elite emerges as the new class of educated and industrial men having good positions, in addition to the native aristocrats and the lower class in the African novels. The gap between classes gets deeper and wider due to capitalism, and the new classes, in the eight novels, that is, the Upper Middle class and the New Elite, are portrayed as composed of corrupt people exploiting the lower classes. The consequences are thus social injustices, economic inequalities and poverty for the deprived, who grow a feeling of being inferior in all aspects of life mainly in comparison with the higher classes. One reason which contributes to engendering this 'inferiority complex' in the native characters but also in those of the lower classes is again attributed by the writers to capitalism. It is what Thorstain Veblen calls the 'conspicuous consumption' of the leisure (higher) class, that is, the necessary need to squander money for mere ostentation. In other words, showing one's higher social position through excessive spendings and consumption of goods is a must in the capitalist environment, given its competitive nature:

> The basis on which good repute in any highly organized industrial community ultimately rests is pecuniary strength; and the means of showing pecuniary strength, and so of gaining or retaining a good name, are leisure and a conspicuous consumption of goods.[14]

[14] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, (1899), chapter 4: 'Conspicuous Consumption', in **<http://www.fullbooks.com/The-Theory-of-the-Laisure-Class.html.>** and **<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/VEBLEN/veb_toc.html.1996.>**

Such outcomes as social injustices, economic inequalities and poverty are rendered by the notion of the city as an 'urban jungle'. In their denunciation of the capitalist system flourishing in the urban milieu, the writers depict Johannesburg, Lagos, Nairobi, Chicago and New York as 'jungles' in the Darwinian sense of the term since the only philosophy prevailing is that of the 'survival of the fittest'. All of the weak individuals are socially, economically and biologically determined to fail. In the novels under study, the characters doomed to fail are mainly those whose idealism hinders their capacity to understand, accept and cope with the 'negative' changes affecting their societies. Maggie, Hurstwood, Carol, Jurgis, Obi, Stephen Kumalo, Wanja and her lovers, Freddie and Jagua all fail, with different degrees, especially because of their idealism. This 'urban jungle' image is stressed more in the works of Crane, Dreiser and Sinclair since Darwinism is closely linked to Naturalism. Maggie, Hurstwood and Jurgis are, in Dreiser's words, 'inconspicuous drops' in a vast 'ocean'.

Close to the notion of the 'urban jungle' is that of urban alienation felt by characters, which, according to Raymond Williams, is a recurrent theme in modernist literature, and by extension, in twentieth century literature:

> Closely related to this first theme of the crowd of strangers is a second major theme, of an individual lonely and isolated within the crowd. We can note some continuity in each theme from more general Romantic motifs: the general apprehension of mystery and of extreme and precarious forms of consciousness; the intensity of a paradoxical self-realisation in isolation. But what has happened, in each case, is that an apparently objective milieu, for each of these conditions, has been

> identified in the newly expanding and overcrowded modern city.[15]

This feeling of alienation engendered by the city's overall atmosphere is mainly the constant feeling of characters of being strangers in the city. Fredric Jameson attributes this feeling of urban alienation that the individual, especially the 'weak', undergoes to the capitalist system –in the postmodernist context, thus in the twentieth-century–, whose impact is so 'dehumanising' that the individual loses all sense of belonging (identity, culture, environment) being, therefore, on the brink of a real state of 'schizophrenia':

> He (Fredric Jameson) describes postmodernism as a 'cultural dominant'; the combined result of a reaction to institutionalized modernism and of a decisive shift from monopoly to multinational Capitalism. This faceless expansion of the global market and the accompanying development of electronic media has penetrated all levels of existence, says Jameson, producing a massively coded world of relentless commodification and dramatically altered social and psychic conditions. (…) The individual, formerly alienated under monopoly capitalism, now becomes 'schizophrenic', all sense even of lost authenticity gone.[16]

Alienation is all the more important if one considers the kind of characters who undergo this feeling: those who are idealistic.

---

[15]Raymond Williams, 'The Metropolis and the Emergence of Modernism', in Peter Brooker, (ed.), *Modernism/Postmodernism*, p.86.

[16]Peter Brooker, (ed.), *Modernism/Postmodernism*, Introduction, pp.21-22.

In the last chapter, which is devoted to a comparative study of country and city people and which will include a synthesis of chapters two and three, I will focus on the writers' dealing with the themes of idealism and disillusion in relation to their main characters and the twentieth-century American and African contexts.

In the four American novels under study, the main characters have a dream, the American Dream. They all want to change their situations and living conditions, either in the countryside or the city. Carol wants to change the rural life and the attitude of rural people to a more sophisticated, more 'beautiful' world. Carrie wants to move from rural life to urban life in an endless quest for the 'sublime'. Maggie seeks better living conditions and 'true feelings' even in her Bowery district. Jurgis simply dreams of a good job and a good salary. The characters, however, have something in their personality which is quite incompatible with the twentieth century industrialised urban context they live in: a strong will to *change* things for the better, in the *city*. The writers, quite aware of this very point, insist on the fact that those aiming to 'reform' a capitalist urban milieu fail in one way or another, sooner or later, given the utopian nature of their dreams. Carol could not reform the resistant Gopher Prairie, Carrie realises her dreams but enters the urban vicious circle of 'satisfaction-more greed', Jurgis could not even secure a stable job nor could he gather his shattered family, and Maggie turns to prostitution.

Similarly, in the four African novels under study, the main characters have dreams of *change*: an Afrotopia in the postcolonial rural and urban context. Obi Okonkwo wants to reform his deeply corrupted society in Lagos City. Karega wants to reform his native village –rapidly growing into a big town– through education. Stephen Kumalo dreams of

restoring such Christian values as charity and kindness in his attempts at bringing back justice as well as racial and class equalities to Johannesburg and Ndotsheni. Jagua wants to improve her economic conditions in Lagos City and 'shine' among the crowd. Here again, the writers, though adding an optimistic touch at times, clearly point at the *inevitability* of failure of all the people willing to reform the city or the already transformed rural regions. Obi is arrested on corruption charges, Stephen Kumalo loses his brother spiritually and his son physically, Jagua turns to prostitution and Karega fails to reform Ilmorog, now becoming New Ilmorog.

The common point between the eight novels is the writers' dealing with the transformation of utopia to dystopia. They all link the failure of the characters to their 'excessive' and out-of-place idealism. Only 'realistic' characters, that is, those aware of the unchangeable situation of their rural and urban environments, succeed, though, in the majority of the times, by means of corruption. The other idealistic characters are doomed to fail. They are all disillusioned and undergo a state of psychological dilemma caused by the clash of their ideals with the reality they live in, their dreams of better rural and urban conditions and social reforms with the capitalist, industrial and neo-colonial context of the city dominated by a 'fierce' competition to climb higher social scales.

In a nutshell, both the African and American novelists under study denounce the capitalist system for the 'negative' changes in rural and urban environments, hinting thus at the universality of this theme in the twentieth century. By means of Naturalism and Social Realism as modes of writing, as well as irony and satire as elements of style, some

(Ngugi, Sinclair and to some extent Dreiser) even suggest a Socialist solution to modern, urban, capitalist evils.

To end these introductory remarks, despite the different social, historical, political and economic backgrounds of the eight writers, my study is intended to consider different parallels between them, and also show how the influence of Flaubert and Zola is predominant in them. The major common points concern themes (protest against capitalism and colonialism, idealism and the failure of people's dreams, public morality, social evils in the city, and the devaluation of the countryside), modes of writing (both naturalism and social realism serve the element of protest as well as critique), and styles (mock heroic tone, satire and irony, mainly that of fate). Further investigation, however, will certainly bring forward many other parallels and contrasts worth mentioning. Prior to this, however, it would be relevant to shed light on the key concepts, notions and theories that will support this study and that is the content of chapter one.

Chapter One:

Theoretical Reflections

Books always speak of other books and every story
tells a story that has already been told.
Umberto Eco

(…) Much more than the Western novel, the African novel defies easy genre boundaries. It is, in short, more epic, more political, more didactic, and more connected to its literary antecedents than the Western novel.
Joanna Sullivan

Myths are public dreams, dreams are private myths.
Joseph Campbell

The whole visible universe is but a storehouse of images and signs to which the imagination will give a relative place and value; it is a sort of pasture which the imagination must digest and transform.
Charles Baudelaire

Introduction

In this chapter, we will put forward the theoretical background of this research work. As mentioned earlier on, the theory we will be using to back up our analysis of the literary works constituting the corpus will not be exclusive, given the nature of the topic itself and the variety of the novels under study.

We will start, in Section A, by a contextualisation of realism and naturalism in American and African literatures, with a focus on the major characteristics of both realism (and, by extension, naturalism) and the two literatures of our interest. The role of the novel will be highlighted in both American and African realistic and naturalistic literatures, as realistic fiction's major –and most fitting- tool to portray reality and depict it in detail. Prominent theoretical works like Georg Lukàcs's *The Theory of the Novel*, *Studies in European Realism*, and "Realism in the Balance"; Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis*; Wayne C. Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction*; Vernon Louis Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought (Vol.3)*; and David Lodge's *The Art of Fiction* will be of significant relevance to our overall analysis.

In Section B, we will try to cast light on the European realistic and naturalistic literary background that helped shape these literatures. In our attempt to demonstrate and explain the link between, on one side, European realism and naturalism, and, on the other side, American and African realisms and naturalisms, we will attempt to highlight the phenomenon of literary influence –because it is "human", and therefore concrete at the basis, before being a theory, which might suggest its abstract aspect- and its probable and more direct successor or result, intertextuality. Despite the slippery nature of both terms,

in the sense that they tend to be hardly “palpable”, that is, hardly scientifically based (therefore speculative), we have come to believe that this theory could not be ignored here since there are many instances of similarities between works produced by some prominent French realist and naturalist writers and by their American and African counterparts. What we mean by “similarities”, however, is not what one may call “flat parallels” or simple analogies. Resemblances inherent in literary products written in different geographical –and often, historical- contexts but within the frame of the same literary tendency (or, more commonly, “current”) require a deeper analysis than just drawing parallels. Therefore, the theory of influence and intertextuality will serve our aim at trying to bring answers to the “whys” of such literary connexions, which are, at times, overtly acknowledged by the authors and, at other times, implicit.

We will then move, in Section C, to the topic of this research work, namely the representation of rural and urban environments in American and African realistic and naturalistic literatures, in general. We have noticed that the colonial historical contexts of both America and Africa helped shape the national identity and culture of both geographical areas, and this was clearly reflected in their literatures. Therefore, it would be useful to bear in mind, before engaging in any kind of comparative study of both literatures, that their respective contexts are at the source of an important number of similarities inherent in them. These common points concern mainly subject matter -or themes- and imagery, but they also include character and setting. Thus, the representation of both rural and urban environments and their constituent elements (the village, the train and the railway, city objects and places, country people and city people) in American and

African realistic and naturalistic literatures converges on more than one point –which offers us considerable material for discussion– despite the existing differences imposed by the more general cultural, historical, geographical, and socio-economic separations. In this section, and in our dealing with the two environments in both literatures, we will devote space to the ecocritical theory due to its relevance to the topic. The train –or the machine– and the railroad will also be dealt with, being the medium linking the country and the city, and therefore, constituting an important element in environmental studies since it has long become part and parcel of the 'modern', or twentieth-century, American and African landscapes. However, the handling of the locomotive (as the train was first referred to) and the railroad will not be exclusively ecocritical but will also be part of an iconological study of this technological invention, a study of the symbol on which the New Historians very often insist, mainly in American literature. Owing to the fact that very little has been investigated so far concerning the symbolic dimension of the machine and the railway in African literature, we will try to bring to the surface this important yet neglected aspect in the selected novels.

As part of our analysis of both environments, we will include a study of gender and try to explain the ways in which male and female characters are portrayed in the works chosen here and the reasons for such representations. An emphasis will be put on a very important concept –and, actually, theme– characterising particularly country people, or the provincial, and which is alienation. This psychological phenomenon will be related to two other significant psychological notions, namely inferiority complex and literary Bovarysm. We will attempt to demonstrate how these states of the psyche operate in the

minds of both female and male characters, especially those going from the province to the metropolis. Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and some other relevant psychoanalytical pieces of criticism such as Fredric Jameson's Marxist criticism (including his critique of the effects of late capitalism on culture and the individual's psyche in the postmodern era) will be of great utility to our demonstration. Relevant to our work is a study of the major myths in relation to the general topic (pastoral/agricultural, the prostitute, frontier, machine, urban frontier, success) as well as concepts directly related to it (Eden Garden, Manifest Destiny, Garden-City, Utopias, utopian cities, City-upon-a-hill).

Still in Section C, the last part of this chapter, we will try to explain the topic of this research work in the selected novels composing our corpus under study. In other words, our main focus will be to cast light on the presence of both rural and urban environments in the novels chosen as a case study, and to analyse their representation with a particular emphasis on an explanation of the reasons behind its converging and diverging points. As mentioned in the general introduction of this thesis, our corpus comprises a selection of realistic and naturalistic works from two different continents: four novels by four ('white') American writers, and four novels by four native African writers –from East, West and South Africa.

These works lend themselves to the study of significant points upon which we shall cast light by the end of this chapter and in the succeeding chapters. We shall consider determinism (biological –hereditary- and environmental), the pastoral, the train and the railway, the metropolis, country people and city people –with particular focus on their

physical description, attitudes, speech, behaviour, psychological introspection (including the feeling of ‘ennui’ or Bovarysm), their dreams and ideals, and their reactions to the city (pastoral and primitivist impulses, or a magnet attraction to the city). The idealism of the writers inherent in the novels under study –and resulting from dissent or disillusion with the new realities, the change in the landscape/space, the loss of the past, and a nostalgia for what was pure and has gone– will also be the centre of attention when dealing with these themes and concepts, since such feelings on the part of the authors show a romantic attitude, reflected in their idealism and optimism, despite the seemingly pessimistic perspective they offer.

A- Realism and Naturalism: American and African Perspectives in Literature

Prior to the theoretical approach adopted for this study, it is important to define the terms realism and naturalism as they will be used. In fact, there are two broad divergent views among literary historians and literary critics on whether to include naturalism in the ‘literary current’ of realism or whether to consider it (the former) a separate movement in literature. In the case of specialists in American studies –whose conclusions can be generalised to literature as a whole since they very often rely on references to European and non-European literatures– one can clearly notice this division. If, for example, Vernon Louis Parrington, Michael Davitt Bell and Phillip Barrish claim that naturalism

emerged from realism and, therefore, is included in it being but an extended form of it, others like Richard Lehan, Donald Pizer, Harold Bloom and Philip Fisher argue that naturalism is distinct from its literary predecessor. The use of the two terms in this research work is meant, on the one hand, to show that there is certainly a difference between the two and, on the other hand, to avoid misleading the readers because, in general –especially in American literary studies–, realism tends to be taken for the nineteenth-century literary movement that started in Europe and that reached American writers, who timidly and mildly depicted the disfigured face of post-bellum America and its changing scene. In the core of this study, however, we try to discuss the works from the standpoint that naturalism is included in realism and is actually part of it. This said, it does also have criteria of its own, making it distinguishable in style and purpose. Therefore, we consider the American and African authors selected here to be basically realists and their works under study realistic with a prominent naturalist tendency. This, consequently, leads us to devote a considerable space to the latter in our attempt at analysing the naturalist aspects in each oeuvre. Another aspect of this study is to investigate how the African view of realism and naturalism compares and contrasts with the American view for the purpose of providing an assessment, however partial, of realism and naturalism in African fiction. I shall thus focus on the ways in which the rural and urban environments are treated in African realistic and naturalistic fiction**.**

In general terms, realism is a literary movement born in Europe, aiming at depicting "familiar characters, situations, and settings in a realistic manner (...) by using an objective narrative point of view and through the buildup of accurate detail. The standard

for success of any realistic work depends on how faithfully it transfers common experience into fictional forms. The realistic method may be altered or extended, as in stream of consciousness writing, to record highly subjective experience."[17]

To focus on the points set forth previously, one should first attempt to come to terms with the concepts of realism and naturalism, and the relationship between them. It is necessary first to provide a clearer definition of realism as "a specific kind of literary representation."[18] However, while it is thus "convenient to have labels for literary periods" and schools,[19] one should note that there is no single and final definition of realism. The reason can be inferred from Michael Davitt Bell's argument in the introduction to his *The Problem of American Realism*.[20] What Bell says about American literary realism seems valid for literary realism at large. As he draws attention to the fact that realism is thought by some American scholars to be a concept so clear as to have been secured as "the dominant standard of value" in America,[21] he nevertheless considers its definition as the first and most intricate "problem of American Realism." For him, "realism" is a useful term but which refers only to "a supposed mode or kind of literature,"[22] and due definition of which remains "virtually impossible":

---

[17]Diane Telgen (ed.), 'Glossary of Literary Terms,' in *Novels for Students* (Vol.1). Detroit, New York, Toronto and London : Gale, 1997. p.337.

[18]Michael Davitt Bell, *The Problem of American Realism, Studies in the Cultural History of a Literary Idea*, Introduction: American Realism, p.1 (for the words, not the idea).

[19]*Ibid.*

[20]*Ibid.* Although Bell is introducing the specific subject of his book which is American Realism, his point here concerns literary Realism at large and is not specific to American Realism. It is definitely valid for Realism in general.

[21]Bell drawing on an argument of Warner Burthoff's in *The Ferments of Realism: American Literature, 1884-1919,* (New York: Free Press, 1965.) P. 1.

[22]Michael Davitt Bell, *The Problem of American Realism*, Introduction, p.1.

> It is hard to see Howells, Twain and James -not to mention such successors as Sarah Orne Jewett, Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, and Theodore Dreiser- as constituting any single literary tradition or ‘school’ of literature; the differences among their characteristic modes are far more striking than the similarities. It is also virtually impossible to extract from their novels and manifestoes any consistent definition of ‘Realism’ (or of ‘Naturalism’) as a specific kind of literary representation.[23]

In this view of things, what all writers –including those who are supposed to be the furthest away from this mode of writing, such as science-fiction and surrealist writers– strive to do is to recreate ‘aspects’ of life itself. In other words, they all seek to render vivid pictures about life, that is reality. From this standpoint, it can be thus argued that there is no single writer that is not a “realist”, as mentioned earlier.

It follows from this a radical definition of literary realism, which is not exactly the one adopted in this work but which is useful to put forward at this juncture. It is indeed necessary to do this for two reasons. The first is that a work -such as this one- that is directly related to the concept should not ignore the importance of showing one’s awareness of its different conceptions, including the radical one. The second is that such a radical, or philosophical, conception of realism comforts us nevertheless in our classification of writers like Ngûgî, Achebe and Dreiser[24] as realists despite the controversy that exists about such a classification. Radically then, realism emerges not as

[23]Michael Davitt Bell, *The Problem of American Realism, Studies in the Cultural History of a Literary Idea*, Introduction: American Realism, p.1.

[24]Indeed, some critics classify Ngûgî as a Modernist, and others as Postmodernist. Similarly, not all scholars consider Dreiser unquestionably as a Naturalist despite the considerable consensus on the naturalistic rather than realistic character of his work. And yet there are good reasons to categorise these writers as Realists as we suggest here and will further explain.

the conventional mode of writing with definite standards agreed upon by literary historians but, as a whole, a varied set of attitudes that writers have towards life and the craft of writing. For example, romantic writers are so categorised not because their writings are utterly otherworldly and not related to reality but only because of the kind of relation which they entertain with reality and with the craft of writing. They use a set of procedures that is specific, but there is no doubt that their writings reflect a certain view of *reality*, one which is proper to them.[25] It seems clear that the criteria of romanticism as defined by René Wellek are mere writing attitudes –techniques to express things that can be hidden from our senses and which, for the romantics, can best be captured by these procedures of romantic writing. But those things which they capture are definitely part and parcel of reality and not of some unreal setting. From this perspective, even the romantics might be called realists. This could be extended to the symbolists, modernists, postmodernists, existentialists and even the absurdists and the surrealists. Their works all refer to given realities though their modes, techniques and devices, their 'schools' certainly differ among themselves and from those of the realists' in the strict sense.

Concerning realism as a definite mode of narration distinguished from the other literary modes with specific defining norms of its own, there is also a precision that seems important to make before trying to define it: its relationship with reality. Indeed, the relation in which realism stands to reality is complex. Certainly, there is kinship between the two –realism can be conceived of as reality's "cousin,"[26] to borrow Michael Davitt

[25]namely "imagination as a view of fiction," "symbol and myth for poetic style" and "Nature for a view of the world", as Rene Wellek points out**.**
[26]Michael Davitt Bell in *The Problem of American Realism*, Introduction, p.1.

Bell's beautiful metaphor. But that really seems the closest relation of kinship that can stand for the link between them. Two main facts seem to prevent them from being any 'closer relatives', and distinguish them. Indeed, realism is no utter imitation of reality but a literary mode that carries an attempt not only to capture it but also to supersede it.

There is an image which can give us a particularly clear idea about this relationship. Let us consider a real event, a documentary work about that event, and a realistic creative work about the same event (cinematographic dramatisation of it). Not only the event as rendered by the realistic movie would be different from the real life event but it would be even very different from the documentary work on the same event. (The three certainly have the same basis -the event- but the farthest one goes in the 'fictional' aspect of the creative work, the farthest one goes away from reality.) In other words, in comparison with the way the event is captured in the documentary, the way it is done in the realistic movie makes it an exaggerated, embellished version of it. In comparison with the event as it has happened in reality, it would be even more transformed –exaggerated and embellished– in the movie. There are then essential differences between the two and the *aesthetics* of realism seems to be the first and most fundamental one. The second essential difference between the two is simply the fact that a realist writer can indeed imagine events that are conceivable in real life but which would never have happened in reality, that is, which are absolutely fictitious.

Thus, even the conventional, academic meaning of realism is not self-evident and not easy to circumscribe. It is again not what it is likely to be mistaken for, that is, mere intention or tendency among a category of writers to *imitate* life. It seems that what realist

writers –the great realists anyway- tend to do is rather the opposite: create situations that have little, if anything at all, to do with reality. What they strive to do is to create *fictional* artefacts – stories – which are akin to reality and are of the same essence as it. That realism shares much with reality, including essential things such as the one implied by Vladimir Nabokov's comparison of the two, is an undeniable fact. As he writes, both "mean nothing without quotes."[27] Nevertheless, what the realists do is create situations that do not exist in reality and which are only akin to it, a sort of parallel to reality, recreating it so well that readers are likely to confuse them with real life.

This can be deduced from the definitions of realism devised by Marxist and historicist theorists who consider that the limits between real life and the work of a realist writer are minimal. George Lukacs, for instance, has a sophisticated view of realism, in that it incorporates the formal –aesthetic- side of literature. For all its worth, his theory, as is the case with the Marxist theory of aesthetics as a whole, is nevertheless too abstract and complicated[28]. In addition, it seeks to attribute realism to Marxism. Also, his argument concerning the link between reality and realism is fraught with exaggeration. Lukacs' theory on realism as a unit and on its relationship with reality does not correspond to our own view of them. The following part of his argument is yet pertinent to our point as it makes us see how close realism and reality can be and how they can intersect while remaining distinct from each other:

[27] Vladimir Nabokov, "On a Book Entitled *Lolita*," in *The Annotated Lolita*, ed. Alfred Appel, Jr. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), p.314, cited by Michael Davitt Bell in *The Problem of American Realism*, Introduction, p.1.
[28] For a good idea on Lukacs' own theory of Realism, more detail and what can be accepted as its other limitations, see Charles Prusik's "Rethinking Realism: A Critique of Georg Lukacs", *American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal* 5:1 Fall 2012 / Winter 2013.

> The best realists, he [Lukacs] claims, “depict the vital, but not immediately obvious forces at work in objective reality." They do so with such profundity and truth that the products of their imagination can potentially receive confirmation from subsequent historical events. The true masterpieces of realism can be appreciated as “wholes” which depict a wide-ranging and exhaustive objective reality like the one that exists in the non-fictional world.[29]

Lukacs’ view of realism and its relationship with creative literature in general, mainly in his article entitled “Realism in the Balance” (1938), is relevant to our argument in another way. It corroborates our previous point about realism’s close relationship with the other modes of writing, mainly modernism, and provides interesting detail on that relationship.

It would be interesting here to examine realism’s relationship with naturalism. A sharp differentiation between the two concepts is not necessary to make in this work, our point being to compare the ways the rural and urban environments are treated in samples of American realistic and naturalistic fiction and its African equivalent. And, as can be noticed, the term that we have chosen to refer to the kind of literature that has to do with reality, as much as suggested before, is realism, rather than naturalism. This is motivated by the fact that in our perspective it is the term realism rather than naturalism that seems fitter to describe that kind of literature, despite the intricacy of the choice.

Indeed, it is hard to say which of realism and naturalism is a larger form of the other and, therefore, to decide which of them includes the other and which is included. In effect, realism came first in literary history, as said earlier. Its significance can be roughly

[29]“Realism in the Balance” (1938)—Lukács’ defence of literary realism, Wikipedia, anonymous, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gy%C3%B6rgy_Luk%C3%A1cs>

summarised as a mode of literary representation that is not in contradiction with reality and what is supposed to be reality's causes and regulations. Naturalism, for its part, came later in literary history and can be defined in the same terms as realism, but considering more closely the details of reality and its 'scientific' connections. But this does not imply that naturalism describes better and more exhaustively the facts and circumstances to which both concepts can make reference. Despite the existence of scholars and literary historians such as Harold Bloom in *American Naturalism* and Donald Pizer in *Documents of American Realism and Naturalism* among other works, (and Linda L. Stein's and Peter J. Lehu's introduction to their *Literary Research and the American Realism and Naturalism Period, Strategies and Sources*, Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2009. Pp. ix-xi) who insist more or less on the necessity of making a sharp distinction between the two, the issue can arguably be settled by considering the two concepts as 'the two sides of the same coin'. But this is not enough to justify our choice.

As commonly agreed upon, naturalism can arguably be seen as a derivative of realism, an approach to narration which does not contradict realism, but which is in perfect harmony with it, and which can be described as a series of footnotes to it. The fact that realism does not deal with such 'footnotes' does not mean that it does not suggest them or even that the writers are not aware of them. On the contrary, a writer such as Shakespeare is often considered as the precursor of scholars, such as Freud and Darwin, whose work together with that of the realists' themselves came to form the background of literary naturalism. For that reason, would it be more logical to call Freud and Darwin, and all the naturalist writers that they have influenced, Shakespearian rather than considering (unless

ironically) Shakespeare's work Freudian and Darwinian? For another argument in favour of realism being a more inclusive concept in comparison with naturalism (and not the contrary), one cannot reasonably call Balzac 'the French realist par excellence' a naturalist while one can rather safely call Zola 'Yet the naturalist par excellence' a realist. The title of Michael Davitt Bell's *The Problem of American Realism, Studies in the Cultural History of a Literary Idea* and many of the points that it makes (as well as Phillip Barrish's *The Cambridge Introduction to American Literary Realism,*Vernon Louis Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought* Vol.3) provide other good points in support of our choice. That said, the noteworthy factors of differentiation between realism and naturalism will be taken into consideration whenever necessary in this study.

Rather than differentiating realism from naturalism, what seems more pertinent to do concerning the notion of realism is to try to identify what might be its technical defining criteria, in order to use them as guidelines in our subsequent comparisons of the ways and the points for which the rural and urban environments are depicted in African and American literatures. As we insisted, it is difficult to do this with precision in view of the oxymoronic nature of the concept of realism. But if one is to retain only four such criteria, they would be summed up in what follows.

First, realism is characterised by verisimilitude with reality, a tendency to avoid idealism. In general, realist writers seek to keep away from romanticism. That said, it would not be accurate to think that even texts that are most committed to realism, such as Zola's *Germinal* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, are devoid of passages that can be described as idealistic in vision and romantic in technique. Even if realism is known to be

an outcome of a 'rebellion' against romance, it none the less comes from it. It is noticeable that the realist writers, notwithstanding the degree of their commitment to realism, do not maintain a realist mode of writing strictly throughout their narratives. If one agrees with Frank Norris, Zola can be read as a 'romantic' rather than a naturalist writer.[30] Similarly, Harold Bloom, referring to Paul Sorrentino's 'Stephen Crane's Struggle with Romance in *The Third Violet*', points out that Crane, one of the icons of American naturalism, struggles in vain with romance.[31] Phillip Barrish's *The Cambridge Introduction to American Literary Realism* provides an excellent argument about realism's 'debts to romance'[32]. I will deal with the realists' tendency to romanticise facts in detail in chapter four which will be devoted to that matter.

It also seems to be an unquestionable feature of realistic literature that it privileges a style that produces an impression of directness and clarity, or rather a style that relies on techniques that make it literary or poetic despite a characteristic illusion of plainness that it creates in readers, in comparison with the other modes of narration. Drawing on Henry James, Phillip Barrish identifies these techniques as follows: first, the production of what Henry James calls an "air of reality"[33] through procedures of mediating narration –that may vary from one author to another- to 'manipulate' the reader so as to give him/her an

[30] 'Zola as Romantic Writer' by Frank Norris in Bloom's *American Naturalism* and in Donald Pizer's *Documents of American Realism and Naturalism*
[31] Crane's romanticism in Bloom's *Stephen Crane Guide*.
[32] See Phillip Barrish, *The Cambridge Introduction to American Literary Realism,* 'Chapter One: Literary Precursors Literary Contexts', New York: CUP, 2011. See in particular the section 'Realism's Debts to Romance', pp. 19-23.
[33] Henry James, *Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers and English Writers*. Ed. Mark Wilson and Leon Edel. Vol. I. New York: Library of America, 1984. p.53. Quoted in Phillip Barrish, *Ibid;* p.42.

"illusion" or, in James' words again, a "sense of reality"; [34] second, "solidity of specification," i.e., the use of practices that testify to a capacity and power to deal with detail and description capable of evoking compelling life-like images in the reader's mind; third, the choice of a specific kind of stories, which Barrish calls simply "realist stories", and the production of a specific kind of discourse which he calls a "realist discourse." For precision, Barrish defines a story as "*what* happens? *who* does it happen to?" and discourse as "*how* is the reader made aware of the story?"[35] In other words, realist writers choose their stories and the ways in which they narrate them in such a way as not to contradict the reader's expectations in terms of how they could occur in real life.

The fourth technique of realism identified by Barrish is the use of direct quotation or letting characters speak for themselves, that is to say the writers try not to intervene in introducing the characters to us but rather manage in different ways to make the characters *show* us who they are just as in real life. The fifth technique consists of the realist author's reliance on a third-person omniscient narrator rather than first-person narrator with the exception of a few examples such as Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The sixth technique on which the realists rely is free-indirect discourse. It testifies to the narrator's confidence as to the identity and thought of that character to the point that he expresses that character's thought on his (the narrator's) own tongue. It also testifies to high moments of complicity between all of the narrator, the

[34]Henry James, *Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers and English Writers*. Ed. Mark Wilson and Leon Edel. Vol. I. New York: Library of America, 1984. p.52. Quoted in Phillip Barrish, *Ibid;* p.42.
[35]See Phillip Barrish, *The Cambridge Introduction to American Literary Realism,* 'Chapter Three: Creating the "Odour" of the Real: Techniques of Realism', p. 46.

character in question, the writer and the reader. This practice consists of the deliberate blurring of the narrator's and one of his/her character's points of view. This exercise can be frequent and typical of a writer's style, as in Jane Austen's and Gustave Flaubert's fiction, or sporadic and occasional as in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and in Achebe's and Ngugi's works. Last but not least, the seventh technique to which the realists have recourse is the use of a narrator as imperfect historian.[36] Roughly, this consists of a set of usages that are intended to make the realist narrative sound imaginable with reference to real life and history but which are not and should not in the least be so. It is these procedures that distinguish the story-teller from (professional, more 'perfect') historians.

Considering the fifth standard, it consists of its interest in specific themes. There is a number of topics treasured by the realists, themes that are recurrent in their works and which embody their views of both literature and life. A detailed list of such themes is likely to be very long. All the same, two broad themes can summarize the subject matter of the realists.[37] First of all, there seems to be a typical interest of the realist writers in the change of human life, or in the "evolution", to recall Darwin's concept, from rural (or "pastoral") to urban. With reference to American realism, the concern with this theme and the rationale behind such concern are pointed out by Linda Stein and Peter Lehu as they write:

[36]*Ibid*. For details on these techniques of Realism, See Phillip Barrish**,** *The Cambridge Introduction to American Literary Realism,* 'Chapter Three: Creating the "Odour" of the Real: Techniques of Realism', pp. 41-57.
[37]For a good and exhaustive idea about this, see for example, Linda L. Stein's and Peter J. Lehu's introduction to their *Literary Research and the American Realism and Naturalism Period, Strategies and Sources*, Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2009. Pp. ix-xi.

> All literature represents change in society, but the literature of the American realism and naturalism period is especially characterized by its response to the political, economic, and technological changes that transformed the nation during the Civil War and postbellum years. American authors exchanged romantic, moralistic storytelling for a more pragmatic realism as the war ended and Southern Reconstruction began. Northern industrialism dominated the rural farm communities of the South, stimulating the growth of factories and the migration of farmworkers to cities. The transcontinental railroad and expansion to new territories in the West, Philippines, and Alaska boosted the economy.[38]

As this statement also implies, the concern with this theme is not a specificity of American realism. Either by influence or mere analogy, it is also an important characteristic of African realism despite the difference of the historical and geographical contexts and, from a certain perspective, even of the objectives at which the African authors aim by its dramatisation. Achebe's work is a case in point. His fiction conveys not just some transient or secondary interest in change from a rural to an urban environment, but a genuine and permanent obsession with it. His novels, from *Things Fall Apart* to *Anthills of the Savannah*, can be considered as a detailed dramatisation of change of this sort, that which came over his country, and Africa as a whole, as a result of their encounter with the West. Such is the case with Ngugi, Ekwensi, and Paton's works as we shall see in detail in due course. Linked to this theme is the impact of economic environment (industrialisation, urbanisation -through the "train" and "the railroad"

[38] *Idem.*, p.ix.

mainly-, and consumerism, all of which are aspects of capitalism) on human life morally, socially and physically. Interest in these sub-themes, as well, is quite characteristic of both American and African realisms as we shall see.

Another major theme shared by the realists is social class division or disparity, or what Marxists call “class society”. It is noticeable that realistic literature, perhaps more than any other kind of writing, either deliberately or not, conveys an acute sense of consciousness of disparity between the worlds of the rich and the poor and in exploring the relationships and interactions between those worlds. In all cases it seems to be a shaping feature of both American and African realistic literatures. American realists may or may not be motivated by such a consciousness. All the same, the kind of treatment that they make of such a reality conveys such consciousness. It has even owed some of them suspicion of anti-conformism -at least non-conformism- to the kind of society which the post-bellum industrial American society epitomises. In some examples, it has even owed them accusations of pro-communist commitment.[39] The reason is that their depictions of class disparities are indeed often, if not always, tragic and sometimes critical of “class injustice” in America, though, given the American political and socio-cultural context, it remains difficult to affirm that their interest in the subject is simply motivated by their pursuit of communist ideals. In *Homecoming*, Ngugi suggests that he is not in the least an exception in that matter. It suggests that it is one of main subject matters of (realistic) literature at large:

[39] Arthur Miller, George Orwell, John Dos Passos, Edward Albee.

> Literature is, of course, primarily concerned with what any political and economic arrangement does to the spirit and the values governing human relationships. Nobody who has passed through the major cities of Europe and America, where capitalism is in full bloom, can never wish the same fate on Africa –as far as human relationships are concerned. He cannot have failed to see the abject poverty, the moral and physical degradation, and the cultural impoverishment of large masses of the population –amidst plenty and luxury enjoyed by so few. We would be deceiving if we thought that indigenous capitalism –even if it could develop outside the orbit of international monopoly, capitalism and former colonial masters to a competitive level– would produce a society where a few, even if they are black, do not live on the blood of others. For it is not simply a question of some people, be they black, yellow or red, being more wicked or less moral than others.[40]

In Africa, authorial interest in the same reality may be more deliberate and more conscious politically speaking, though things may vary according to individual writers and readers. It can be more the result of overt political commitment and less of abstract consciousness and 'neutral' description of one among other forms of injustice amongst humans. Class disparity is known to be one of Ngugi's main concerns as a writer. But he is not the only African (realist) writer to be interested in this issue. As he also writes:

> Now there are only two tribes left in Africa: the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. What goes for tribalism in Africa is really a form of civil war among the 'haves', struggling for crumbs from the masters' tables. The masters sit in New York, London, Brussels, Paris, Bonn, and Copenhagen; they are the owners of the oil companies,

[40] Ngugi, *Homecoming*, author's notes, London: Heinemann, 1972, pp. xvi-xvii.

> the mines, the banks, the breweries, the insurance institutions –all the moving levers of the economy. It is this situation that has given us a *Man of the People*, *Song of Lawino*, *Voices in the Dark*. It is this that is behind the critical self-appraisal and the despair in much of the current African literature. Few contemporary novels can match the bitterness in Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (…) It is the height of irony that we, who have suffered most from exploitation, are now supporting a system that not only continues that basic exploitation, but exacerbates destructive rivalries between brothers and sisters, a system that thrives on the survival instincts of dwellers in a Darwinian jungle. The writer cannot be exempted from the task of exposing the distorted values governing such a jungle precisely because this distorts healthy human relationships.[41]

Regardless of Ngûgî's political motivation in saying the above, his argument confirms that "the task of exposing the distorted values governing [the] jungle"[42] is vital to realistic literature at large. There are differences as to the way in which the values have been "distorted" and the "jungle" is depicted in African and American realisms, and there will be an occasion to compare them subsequently. But it is quite clear that interest in it is a defining feature of at least the two literary bodies under consideration.

In terms of style, we shall see further along, Realism and Naturalism in African and American fictions and the representations of the rural and urban environments may differ –radically sometimes. On the other hand, the two literatures may display similarities including other stylistic options, sometimes unexpected from them. However, the technical aspects of Realism brilliantly described by Henry James, and rephrased by

[41] Ngugi, *Homecoming*, author's notes, London: Heinemann, 1972, pp. xvii-xviii.
[42] *Ibid.* p. xviii

Phillip Barrish, constitute definitely an area of intersection and interaction between the stylistics of African and American Realisms and the ways in which the rural and urban environments are treated in them. It is, therefore, on those seven points that our stylistic analysis of the sample works of Dreiser, Crane, Lewis and Sinclair, Achebe, Ngugi, Ekwensi and Paton will be articulated. Prior to this, however, it is important to consider African and American Realisms comparatively.

B- Influence and Intertextuality: The Connection with Europe

It is notable that when an author is marked by the reading of another author's writings and cites them, we have a case of intertextuality. When there are indirect instances of some other author's writings in the works of a particular author with no obvious citation, we have a case of literary influence. In terms of the theory of literary influence, things happen in most cases at the unconscious level. In other words, when influence is overt or obvious, its manifestation is intertextuality, and when it is implicit, it remains at the level of the unconscious. Influence can be either direct (that is, acknowledged by the author influenced), or indirect (that is, unspoken, unaware of, or even denied, sometimes). One may also call influence *literary inspiration* (the author influencing being a kind of muse), and therefore intertextuality can be considered as a superposition of texts, older texts in the background, foregrounding newer ones, resulting in a multi-layered and complex text.

As to intertextuality, Heinrich F. Plett points out that it is “a fashionable term, but almost everybody who uses it understands it somewhat differently” and that the “host of publications has not succeeded in changing this situation. On the contrary, their increasing number has only added to the confusion.”[43] This implies that intertextuality may have more than one meaning. Heinrich goes on to give a definition of what a text and an intertext are and to explain the major differences between them:

> All intertexts are texts (…). Yet the reversal of this equation does not automatically imply that all texts are intertexts (…). A text may be regarded as an autonomous sign structure, delimited and coherent. (…) An intertext, on the other hand, is characterized by attributes that exceed it. It is not delimited, but de-limited, for its constituents refer to constituents of one or several other texts. Therefore it has a twofold coherence: an *intratextual* one which guarantees the immanent integrity of the text, and an *intertextual* one which creates structural relations between itself and other texts. This twofold coherence makes for the richness and complexity of the intertext, but also for its problematical status.[44]

Intertextuality, and despite its “problematical status” in Heinrich’s terms, remains, for Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein, “more solid”, “traceable”, and “defended by important critics” and scholars such as Bakhtin, Barthes, Foucault, and Kristeva.[45] Influence, on the

[43]Heinrich F. Plett (ed.). *Intertextuality, Research in Text Theory*. Part I, “Intertextualities”. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1991. p. 3.
[44]Heinrich F. Plett (ed.).*Ibid. Op.cit.* p. 5.
[45]Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein (eds.). *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*. Part I, Chapter I. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991. p.4.

other hand, is, for the two authors, “difficult to validate” or prove, that is why it would be necessary to give sound arguments in order to give it life as a “theory” of its own.[46]

Examples of ‘alien’ or foreign text direct interference in the works under study can be noticed in Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie*, wherein Bob Ames suggests to the heroine that Balzac’s *Le Père Goriot* is an important reading. In Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease*, at least two cases of intertextuality are visible. The title of the novel is itself borrowed from a poem by T. S. Eliot (The Return of the Magi). Achebe also refers to Graham Greene’s *The Heart of the Matter*, through his protagonist, Obi Okonkwo. But there are also cases of self-borrowing in our corpus. Intra-intertextuality can be noticed in Alan Paton’s *Cry, the Beloved Country* when the author mentions the unfinished socio-political writings of the murdered white man, Arthur Jarvis –who defended the cause of the natives– in which he endeavours a study on the origin of black crime that he attributes to white violence. This study was actually that of the author himself, which he conducted when he was the director of a native youth centre. Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* and *Anthills of the Savannah* also contain reminiscences of two of the writer’s previous novels, *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease*. These, however, remain instances of what we may call ‘visible presences.’ It would also be interesting to investigate invisible presences.

It is true that similarities in the works of authors belonging to different geographical, historical, and cultural contexts may be considered as the manifestations of what Jung labels in his psychoanalytical theory “the collective unconscious”. Similar events or conditions occurring in separate backgrounds may lead to the same results, and more or

[46] *Idem.*

less the same reactions by the peoples of these backgrounds, despite the ‘distance’ between the different locations. Yet, when some literary images or particular representations recur in different texts, one may ask whether this is more than just sheer coincidence or context compatibility. We will try to locate and analyse the presence of influential prominent French authors in the realist and naturalist works by the American and the African authors chosen in this corpus. We will attempt to demonstrate such significant presences as Flaubert’s and Zola’s, but also those of Balzac and Maupassant.

The term ‘influence’ has a slippery nature and a speculative aspect. Yet, despite the “untrustworthy” character of biography in the use of the theory of influence, we have not excluded the dealing with some biographical elements, such as the authors’ personal notes, correspondences, and autobiographies, as well as their own readings, and personal libraries due to their relevance to the study of interactional literary phenomena, at least, from the psychoanalytical point of view.

Contrary to the theory of intertextuality, which is modern (born out of Julia Kristeva’s term in 1969), the origins of influence go back to the mid-eighteenth-century, when “originality” and “genius” started to become literary issues. Ever since the phenomenon of influence emerged, it has always been difficult to set boundaries for its definition. The difficulty of defining this concept lies in the fact that it remains speculative and elusive despite efforts at establishing it within theoretical limits. One course of action would be to link it with intertextuality, just as Harold Bloom suggests in *The Anxiety of Influence*.[47] Bloom says that “Influence, as I conceive it, means that there are *no* texts, but only

[47]As quoted by Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein (eds.) in *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*. Part I, Chapter I. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991. p.9.

relationships *between* texts."[48] This suggests a subtle "transition" between influence and intertextuality. In other words, there are affinities between the two concepts. But in spite of the fact that Bloom adopts an author-centred (as opposed to a language-centred) approach to the study of intertextuality, he discards from his scope of analyses "'extrinsic' critical procedures"[49], which gives his theory a non-referential character. Along with Walter Jackson Bate, Bloom breaks away from the school of New Criticism, whose members insist on a drawing up of "a lineage of the great authors."[50] Both Bloom and Bate believe in the idea (as part of the two new post-war theories of influence) of the ancestor as a "despot" rather than a "benefactor."[51] In this sense, both scholars stress the idea that there exists a paradox in the Great Tradition, which may be viewed as a 'squeezing' force. Indeed, the establishment of a literary tradition rather 'kills' originality and leads, instead, to imitation, to influence (be it direct or indirect), to *anxiety*. The constant pressures on authors (Bloom refers to poetry mainly) for originality lead, in fact, to the reverse effect: an unconscious drive or search for imitating former texts by established authors of the past. Nevertheless, there are many points of divergence between the two theories the most important of which is the relevance or not of 'extrinsic' elements to the text in the study of its creator's influence. Still in his *Anxiety of Influence*, Bloom's conception of the poet's intention "does not rely on biography or other historical evidence to establish its claims" and he "relegates such details as whether or not a poet actually read a specific work by the strong precursor to that 'wearisome industry of

[48]*Idem.*
[49]*Idem.*
[50]Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein. *Op.cit*. p.7.
[51]*Idem.*

source-hunting'" because he firmly believes that "The events to which a poem refers, whether personal, historical, mythic, or divine, are merely the backdrop against which the central drama of poetic influence is acted out."[52] Bate, on the other hand, insists on the idea that "questions of influence went hand-in-hand both with biography and with a reflective approach to literary history."[53] It is this particular aspect of the theory of influence we will be using in our study of the works and authors selected.

In terms of the 'fields' where influence can be visible within a text, one can mention *at least* subject matter. Nevertheless, this does not restrict its fields of manifestation to subject matter solely since other elements like language, style, imagery and symbolism, as well as literary devices can also be interesting matters of concern. Specific ways in which events, places and characters are portrayed would also be included in the scope of research.

Our study of influence attempts to be all-inclusive in the sense that the approach adopted will not be restricted to some distinct aspects of this theory, and thus, will not be exclusive of points we consider useful to the analysis of the subject, namely subject matter, biography (hence, the practicality of the psychoanalytical theory), and the influence of 'less important' authors, or non-canonised writers (by contrast to Bloom's argument that literary influence can be applicable only to a list of worldly-recognised authors and that unknown –or less known- writers should not figure in the lineage of influence). Therefore, as stated earlier on, and relying much on Bate's theory, we insist on the utility of examining an author's biography before and while we approach his text

[52] Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein. *Op. cit.* p.9.
[53] *Ibid.* p.8.

since we have noticed that, in many cases, authors tend to acknowledge their own presence in their texts and often identify themselves with their own characters. Elements from their life may, thus, help us understand their works, motives, and specific ways of depicting issues. If Flaubert had once said, “Madame Bovary, c’est moi”[54], and Maupassant –in his turn, influenced by this quote of Flaubert– had often autographed his *Bel-Ami* on copies sold to women “de Bel-Ami lui-même”[55], Dreiser’s opening pages of his first chapters in both *Sister Carrie* (1900) and *A Book About Myself* (1922) remain a striking example of an author’s presence in their works. The view of the big metropolis by Dreiser and by his heroine is the same, and their wonder –and overall reaction– upon their arrival in Chicago is identical. In the first chapter of the author’s autobiographical book, he too seems to say, “Sister Carrie is *me*.” *Sister Carrie* opens with the main protagonist’s feeling of excitement and wonder at what Chicago would look like, when she was heading to the big city at the age of eighteen:

> When Caroline Meeber boarded the afternoon train for Chicago, her total outfit consisted of a small trunk, a cheap imitation alligator-skin satchel, a small lunch in a paper box, and a yellow leather snap purse, containing her ticket, a scrap of paper with her sister's address in Van Buren Street, and four dollars in money. It was in August, 1889. She was eighteen years of age, bright, timid, and full of the illusions of ignorance and youth. (…)
>
> There was the great city, bound more closely by these very trains which came up daily. Columbia City was not so very far away, even once she was in Chicago. What,

[54] Quoted by Laurence M. Porter and Eugene F. Gray in *Gustave Flaubert’s* Madame Bovary, *A Reference Guide*. Chapter Six, “Reception”. Westport, Connecticut & London: Greenwood Press, 2002. p.122.

[55] Trans. “from Bel-Ami, himself”. Philippe Bonnefis in Guy de Maupassant. *Bel-Ami*. « Commentaires ». p.349. Paris : Le Livre de Poche, 2013 (Librairie Générale Française, 1983).

> pray, is a few hours—a few hundred miles? She looked at the little slip bearing her sister's address and wondered. She gazed at the green landscape, now passing in swift review, until her swifter thoughts replaced its impression with vague conjectures of what Chicago might be.
>
> (…) The city has its cunning wiles, no less than the infinitely smaller and more human tempter. There are large forces which allure with all the soulfulness of expression possible in the most cultured human. The gleam of a thousand lights is often as effective as the persuasive light in a wooing and fascinating eye. Half the undoing of the unsophisticated and natural mind is accomplished by forces wholly superhuman. A blare of sound, a roar of life, a vast array of human hives, appeal to the astonished senses in equivocal terms.[56]

Likewise, *A Book About Myself* starts with the author's own feelings of excitement and marvel at the discovery of Chicago at the age of nineteen:

> During the year 1890 I had been formulating my first dim notion as to what it was I wanted to do in life. For two years and more I had been reading Eugene Field's "Sharps and Flats," a column he wrote daily for the Chicago Daily News, and through this, (…) I was beginning to suspect, vaguely at first, that I wanted to write, possibly something like that. Nothing else that I had so far read " novels, plays, poems, histories " gave me quite the same feeling for constructive thought as did the matter of his daily notes, poems, and aphorisms, which were of Chicago principally (…).
>
> (…) To me Chicago at this time seethed with a peculiarly human or realistic atmosphere. It is given to some cities, as to some lands, to suggest romance, and to me Chicago did that hourly. It sang, I thought, and (…) I was singing with it. These seemingly drear neighborhoods through which I walked each day, doing collecting for an easy-payment furniture company, these

[56] Theodore Dreiser. *Sister Carrie*. New York: Signet Classics, 2009. (New York: Doubleday & Page, 1900). "Chapter One: The Magnet Attracting, A Waif Amid Forces." pp.1-2.

> ponderous regions of large homes where new wealthy packers and manufacturers dwelt, these curiously foreign neighborhoods of almost all nationalities; and, lastly, that great downtown area, surrounded on two sides by the river, on the east by the lake, and on the south by railroad yards and stations, the whole set with these new tall buildings, the wonder of the western world, fascinated me. Chicago was so young, so blithe, so new, I thought. (…)
>
> Here was a city which had no traditions but was making them, and this was the very thing that every one seemed to understand and rejoice in. Chicago was like no other city in the world, so said they all. Chicago would outstrip every other American city, New York included, and become the first of all American, if not European or world, cities. . . . This dream many hundreds of thousands of its citizens held dear. Chicago would be first in wealth, first in beauty, first in art achievement.[57]

If we consider the two passages, we can easily notice the presence of Dreiser through the heroine of his first novel. Thus, the life of an author cannot –and should not– be neglected in the study of their own works.

Our approach will, therefore, attempt an eclectic, balanced study between the different theories of influence and intertextuality[58] –a selection of the principles of the New Critics, the poststructuralists, the formalists, and the literary psychoanalysts. New Historicism being included in our study of the symbols related to our topic, namely the rural and the urban environments in the literatures chosen, it would be unreasonable to exclude

[57] Theodore Dreiser. *A Book About Myself*. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1922. Chapter One. pp.1-2.

[58] Relevant names are Julia Kristeva, Harold Bloom, Roland Barthes and Mikhail M. Bakhtin, whose *The Dialogic Imagination* and *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* deal with important notions worth mentioning, namely the theory of the double-voiced discourse, the polyphonic (later 'heteroglossic') novel, or dialogism, and the 'carnivalization' of literature.

historical elements from our analysis of the texts, given the predominant extrinsic nature of the approach.

Consequently, it would undoubtedly be irrelevant nowadays to claim that a literary text comes from the void, that it is parentless, orphaned at its birth. A study of the meta-text would counteract all attempts at denying a “presence”, whatever its nature, from the author’s life and past (a former reading, an acquaintance made at a particular moment in life, to name but a few). Considering the fact that American literature is a “recent” literature –having, first, emerged in the seventeenth-century and having been highly “British” in almost all aspects until the beginning of the nineteenth-century– and that written African literature was born around the early to mid-twentieth-century, one would be inclined to think that the two literatures mentioned were not born out of the blue, and that both have roots in the old continent, where letters emerged in about a millennium ago. Moreover, bearing in mind the fact that the novel, as a form or genre of writing, is definitely European in essence, it would, therefore, not be erroneous to say that there is a European presence in each American writer, just as much as there is a European imprint in each African writer. The French and the English writers are known to have, indeed, influenced in one way or another both American and African authors. Charles Dickens’s fiction, for example, is among the most common influences one can mention on English, American, and French novelists, mainly their “city” novels. However, particular attention will be paid to French realist and naturalist literature as a major source of inspiration for the two literatures under study, since the most prominent figures of realism and naturalism, namely Balzac, Flaubert and Zola, are French.

But before tackling the literary "phenomenon" of influence, it is important to mention that our approach would be based on Bloom's belief that intertextuality should go hand-in-hand with influence, the latter being its most logical –and probable– result. Hence, the terms 'influence' and 'intertextuality' would be used in our research work interchangeably. It is also significant to explain that there are two broad categories or kinds of influence: that which goes *across* or *down*, and that which is *internal* or *external*. The first one is concerned with time or age; it is related to influence writers from the same generation -contemporaries- or from different generations may have on each other. The second one is related to place; it concerns the mutual influence authors from the same country (local) or from different countries (foreign) may exert on each other. In simpler terms, the mutual influence French authors have on their fellow French authors (or American writers on their fellow American writers, or African authors on their fellow African authors) would be a case of influence from within, whereas the influence French authors may exercise on their American or African counterparts would be an instance of influence crossing borders, influence from outside, transcending mainly geographical, cultural, and historical boundaries. Mutual influence would be then the effect two (or more) writers may have on each other (Achebe and Ekwensi, Achebe and Ngugi, Emerson and Thoreau, Maupassant and Flaubert and Zola, the Goncourt brothers and Huysmans), the impact each one's literary work (and often, life, deeds, actions and discourse as well) may exercise on the other's mind, and therefore, on their literary work too. It is all the more necessary to stress here the fact that this interaction happens at two

levels: the *direct* –or the conscious– level, and the *indirect* –or the unconscious– level. At the direct/conscious level, the outcome would be shown via intertextuality. At the indirect/unconscious level, it would be part of the psychoanalytical aspect of influence. The two categories of influence vary from one author to another, and often work together.

One may notice that American and African realist and naturalist literatures contain flashes of European –more precisely, French and English– literatures. Naturalism, being coined and defined by Zola[59], we may be tempted to think that he might have represented an inspiring literary father –figure or model– (as stated by Bloom and mentioned earlier on) for many a writer both in Europe, where the literary "current" was actually born, and in America and postcolonial Africa. The "Groupe de Médan" can be considered as a source of inspiration *inside* and *outside* France with writers like Maupassant, Huysmans, Hennique, Céard, Alexis, and Zola, the latter being a leading figure. All of whom, it would be interesting to mention, were themselves directly influenced by Balzac, *the* realist par excellence. Flaubert was not a direct adherent[60] to the group but was indirectly related to its members since he was a good acquaintance of Zola, and a close friend of Maupassant, who considered him not only as an overtly influencing figure but also as his literary father. Upon Flaubert's death, in 1880, the group paid tribute to his life and work in special remembrance. Both Donald Pizer and Richard Lehan[61] have explained the link

[59] He 'declared' naturalism ("Je déclare le naturalisme") in his 1880 *Le Roman expérimental* and *Les Soirées de Médan,* a collection of short stories which is also regarded as the Naturalist School manifesto.
[60] On Flaubert's realism, Eric Lawrence Gans says that, "Flaubert admired neither the works nor the doctrines of the writers in his time who called themselves "realists." His reaction to critics' descriptions of his novel as "realist" was to claim that he had written *Madame Bovary* "out of hatred for realism."" Eric Lawrence Gans. *Madame Bovary, the End of Romance*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989. p.43.
[61] *See* Donald Pizer's introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism, Howells to London* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), and Richard Lehan's 'The European

between European and American realist and naturalist literatures, tracing back the roots of the latter in to the former. In the novels under study, we may find instances of direct as well as indirect influences, that is, both conscious (manifested through intertextuality) and unconscious, both acknowledged and denied (or, in the least, unaware of).

As stated earlier on, there are two major French sources of influence on the selected American and African writers: Gustave Flaubert and Emile Zola. These two established fathers of French realism and naturalism –themselves under the heavy, yet unseen, presence of their forefather, Honoré de Balzac[62]– affected, whether directly or indirectly, the works chosen. Instances of their influence on the texts of the corpus would be either overtly manifested, that is, with reminiscences from the texts of origin (Flaubert's and Zola's), or implicitly conveyed, that is, with flashes from the works of other writers influenced by these two, namely Jules and Edmond de Goncourt, Joris-Karl Huysmans, and Guy de Maupassant, which stand, then, for secondary (cases or) sources of influence on the authors under study. It would, however, be useful to tackle first the internal mutual influence these French realist and naturalist writers had had on each other before dealing with their impact on the writers of the corpus, and this, in order to understand both the lineage of influence and the way this process operates with authors from three different continents.

Background' in Pizer's same book, as well as 'American Literary Naturalism: The French Connection' published in Harold Bloom's *American Naturalism* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004), and *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol.38, no.4 (March, 1984).

[62]Balzac is known to be the founder of literary realism, Flaubert is referred to as its sculptor into art form, and Zola is considered as the founder of its extreme, namely naturalism.

To start with, we can note that the presence of Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary* is significant in a considerable number of European, American, and African literary works. However, its impact on many major African and American texts as well as its role as a ground work for non-French literatures have not been much investigated despite the obvious imprint this novel had left on classics of realism outside the French borders. Among the overt aspects of influence Flaubert's masterpiece had had on foreign realist (and naturalist) literatures, one can name Bovarysm as a characteristic feature of almost all female protagonists. Therefore, it can fairly be said that there is hardly a western novel or a short story written within the frame of realism and naturalism which does not contain a female character recalling Emma Bovary's physical, behavioural or psychological traits. We can safely generalise this assertion to both American and African realistic fiction in general. Indeed, the publication of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* was a turning-point in literary realism and it marked realistic and naturalistic writings not only in France, but also in Europe and beyond the continent. It is important to say here that his influence on the selected authors is present in their texts under study either directly or indirectly; in other words, as readers, we may find characteristics of Flaubert's Emma or of other female characters by the French authors previously mentioned, themselves influenced by Emma.

Reviews in praise of the novel abound, and that, from its date of publication up to our present times. Great literary figures –like Zola, Maupassant, and Henry James– highlighted the importance of such a masterpiece not only in French but also in world literature. Jacques Neefs, in his preface to the 2013 Livre de Poche edition of the novel,

cites Maupassant who, in 1884, three years after the death of Gustave Flaubert, published a long study in *Revue bleue* in which he said, "L'apparition de *Madame Bovary* fut une révolution dans les lettres." His declaration –and his text– was then used to introduce further publications on the late author as well as later editions of his works.[63] Neefs goes on to give, in his thirty-six-page detailed foreword on the novel, a good number of very positive reviews by authors, theoreticians and literary historians from Europe and America, among whom we can name Erich Auerbach. In his *Mimesis*, the latter claims that the novel's perfection, much beyond the achievement of Stendhal and Balzac, lies in the fact that it succeeded in embodying "modern realism".[64] Bate's and Bloom's (*Anxiety of Influence*) notion of 'the burden of the ancestor' would, therefore, be more than plausible, and the greatness of *MB* –this was also the case with Balzac's and Zola's novels– lies mainly in the fact that it constituted a pillar in the tradition. If Bate "dramatizes in personal, psychological terms the theme of diminished achievement, of weakness in the shadow of departed giants, of the past as burden"[65], Bloom believes (in *The Anxiety of Influence*) that one of the principles of influence would be the reality that the "strong poets feel the burden of the past more sharply than minor writers"[66]. The latter adds further that "Influence is a personal agon, a struggle of one individual with a strong precursor, modeled on the son's conflict with the father in the Oedipus complex."[67]

---

[63] Jacques Neefs. Preface to *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert. 1857. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2013 (Librairie Générale Française, 1999). p.7. Trans. : ''The emergence of *Madame Bovary* was a revolution in Letters.''
[64] *Ibid*., p.15.
[65] Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein (eds.). *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*. Part I, Chapter I. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991. p.8
[66] *Idem.*
[67] *Ibid.* p.9

Therefore, one may understand that the 'unseen' presence of literary fathers has a considerable impact on newer generations of writers.

The influence Flaubert's novel exercised on the literature of its time and the literature that came later can be assessed in terms of themes and style, but also –and mainly– in terms of character depiction (female protagonist characters, especially those coming from the province): their dreams, desires, ambitions, reactions, and their psychological introspection. The dealing with objects, that is, the description of objects by the authors or what is called "the discourse of objects", is also a terrain of influence worth mentioning.[68] This dealing with objects (the material objects characters long for, especially in the city) reveals an influence from Balzac's *Traité de la vie élégante*.[69] As part of the treatment of the metropolis in American and African realist and naturalist literatures, important space is devoted in this research work to the individual's relationship with objects and places. It is of great interest, indeed, to investigate the nature of the relations of people/the individual and the city, mainly country people with the city's objects and places. This point would be further developed in relation to our topic as well as to the corpus in Sections B and C of this chapter.

[68] Some important pieces of criticism on "the discourse of objects" are the writings of Clare Virginia Eby (such as 'Cultural and Historical Contexts for *Sister Carrie*', 2001) and Philip Fisher's *Hard Facts, Setting and Form in the American Novel*, both of whom deal with *Sister Carrie*, in particular, as well as Pierre Danger's *Sensations et objets dans le roman de Flaubert* (Paris : Armand Colin, 1973) and Claude Duchet's « Roman et Objets » in *Travail de Flaubert*, Pres. Gérard Genette. (Paris : le Seuil, coll. « Points », 1983), both of whom deal with *Madame Bovary*, more precisely.

[69] Jacques Neefs. Preface to *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert. 1857. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2013 (Librairie Générale Française, 1999). p.42, note no.1

Zola's main sources of inspiration include Stendhal, Dostoyevsky, Darwin, Taine, Claude Bernard and Jules Michelet, among others. However, it has been proved in literary criticism that Zola's most direct influence was Balzac. The latter's *La Comédie humaine* is known to have inspired the naturalist's *Les Rougon-Macquart, histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le Second Empire.* By the end of 1867, his reading of the first "novelistic encyclopedia", in which characters appear in many sequential novels, gave him the idea of starting a new and big "novelistic cycle."[70] Many of Balzac's novels have left an imprint on Zola's sequels to *La Fortune des Rougon*. Balzac's *Cousine Bette*, for instance, can be sensed in Zola's *Nana*. But the most striking muse of the French naturalist remains undoubtedly Flaubert's *MB*. Indeed, Thérèse in *Thérèse Raquin*, Gervaise in *L'Assommoir*, and Nana in *L'Assommoir* as well as *Nana* all have characteristics of Flaubert's heroine. This is important to mention because these features acquired from Emma would be later transmitted to other realist and naturalist texts from across the globe. Laurence M. Porter and Eugene F. Gray devote a whole chapter on both the reception of *MB* and its later influences on great writers from different countries. In addition to the reception of and praise for this novel by Zola, the two authors give a web of influences by means of an exhaustive chart.[71] The chart suggested by Porter and Gray offers a list of Flaubert's influences on creative writers not only in France but in Europe and the Americas as well. Nonetheless, it does not include possible influences on African

[70] Gérard Gengembre. *Les Rougon-Macquart d'Emile Zola*. '1-Le projet zolien d' « Histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le second empire »'. Paris : Pocket, 2003. p.9
[71] Laurence M. Porter and Eugene F. Gray. *Gustave Flaubert's* Madame Bovary, *A Reference Guide*. (Westport, Connecticut & London: Greenwood Press, 2002), 'Chapter Six: Reception.' pp.117-141. See Table 6.1, a chart of Flaubert's influences on pp.134-135.

writers. Among the long enumeration of prominent writers who have apparently been 'positively' influenced by *MB*, the two authors name Emile Zola, Guy de Maupassant, Joseph Conrad, Kate Chopin, Franz Kafka, Willa Cather, William Faulkner, Vladimir Nabokov, and Roland Barthes. But the authors also name those who have parodied or satirised the novel, or have, in one way or another, been 'repulsed' by its contents including Leo Tolstoy, Henry James, and Sinclair Lewis, the latter being referred to as having denied influence. Unsurprisingly, Zola's penchant for Flaubert's masterpiece indicates that he found elements fitting his naturalistic mode, elements that changed the course of traditional realism that no more suited the literary aims of the "Groupe de Médan."[72] As an illustration of Emma's reflection on Thérèse, we may consider the two passages from both *MB* and *Thérèse Raquin*:

> Elle (Emma) était si triste et si calme, si douce à la fois et si réservée, que l'on se sentait près d'elle pris par un charme glacial, comme l'on frissonne dans les églises sous le parfum des fleurs mêlé au froid des marbres.[73]

And ''(…) Thérèse gardait toujours son indifférence douce, son visage contenu, effrayant de calme.''[74] Thérèse seems to take after Emma in terms of temper and personality traits.

---

[72]Vernon Louis Parrington, in the first line of his addenda, says that *Madame Bovary* is a case of literary naturalism. V. L. Parrington, 'Addenda: Naturalism in American Fiction' in *Main Currents in American Thought*, *Vol.3, The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America (1860-1920).* Norman & London: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1987 (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1930). p.323.

[73]Gustave Flaubert. *Madame Bovary, Mœurs de Province*. 1857. Part II, Chapter V. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2013 (Librairie Générale Française, 1999). p.195. Trans. "She (Emma) was so sad and so calm, so sweet and yet so withdrawn, that in her presence he felt bewitched by an icy charm, just as in church the scent of the flowers blending with the chill of the marble made him shiver." Gustave Flaubert. *Madame Bovary, Provincial Manners*. Trans. by Margaret Mauldon. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004 (1981) Part II, Chapter V. p.96.

[74]Emile Zola. *Thérèse Raquin*. 1867. Paris: Gallimard, 2014 (2001, 1979). Chapter II, p.44. Trans. "Thérèse always kept her indifference quiet, her face contained, frighteningly calm."

Actually, Thérèse and Emma share the same character, the same type of 'failed' husbands, they are intellectually elevated, they have refined manners, they have a taste for art (like Maupassant's Mathilde Loisel in *La Parure*), they are calm but they repress their feelings in a storm of emotions. They both seek extra-marital sources of happiness and find temporary refuge in adultery. They feel the same 'lassitude' and 'ennui', an idea borrowed from Schopenhauer's (1788-1860) pessimistic morality –then in fashion– which influenced writings of the second half of the nineteenth-century. This latter characteristic may be found in Lewis's Carol Kennicott and Dreiser's Carrie Meeber, but also in Sinclair's Marija, Crane's Maggie, Achebe's Clara, Ngugi's Wanja, Paton's Gertrude and Ekwensi's Jagua (though with a difference for Clara, Wanja, Gertrude, and Jagua). The ball Emma attends at the Château of La Vaubyessard and her overall feelings and state of mind following this important event find echoes in many a text among which we can mention, at least, Madame Loisel's reception at the Ministry in Maupassant's *La Parure*, and Carrie's dinner at Sherry's on Fifth Avenue in Dreiser's *SC*. Such social gatherings in these luxurious places trigger the long repressed desires of the heroines, material desires for objects and places yearned for. It is, nevertheless, these very places and objects that put an end to the protagonists' dreams and bring into light their disillusion with what they thought were their eternal sources of satisfaction.

Whether direct or indirect, the presence of *MB* in the texts of our corpus is obvious. Substitutes to elements directly 'extracted' from Flaubert's novel can be found in reminiscences from Maupassant's texts, namely *Bel-Ami*, *Sur l'eau*, *La Parure* and *Une vie*. Maupassant, himself, was under the massive influence of Flaubert's *MB* and Zola's

Au Bonheur des dames, *La Curée*, *Thérèse Raquin*, and *L'Assommoir*.[75] We may find hints at the works of Maupassant in Dreiser's *SC* when an invisible presence of Emma cannot be totally grasped. Harris Merton Lyon states that "Mention has been made casually of Flaubert, Balzac, and Frank Norris in connection with Mr. Dreiser's work" and that "these elements are found there."[76] He also asserts that, at first glance, one may notice that *SC* is "an attempt to do, with an Indiana woman, what Flaubert did with a woman of the provinces, though Carrie is by no means a Madame Bovary. It is an attempt to catch, with the spirit and scope of Balzac, the humdrum life of our bourgeoisie."[77]

But if one is to investigate Dreiser's external sources of influence according to some of his autobiographical elements, one might face the sometimes unreliable facet of the biographical approach. Indeed, basing one's analysis of literary influence exclusively on the biography of the author may lead our research to a deadlock. This does not put into question the whole reliability and practicality of the (auto)biographical approach, which remains very useful in tracing back alien presences in a text. In the case of Dreiser, we have both acknowledged and denied influence. In his autobiographical *A Book About Myself* (1922), Dreiser mentions no source of inspiration the different critics had thought about. Henry Louis Mencken, however, when evoking his talks about literary figures with Dreiser, says:

[75] For more details on influence and intertextuality in the texts of Maupassant (mainly Flaubert's and Zola's influence), see the following texts: Marcelle Bilon in Guy de Maupassant. *Bel-Ami*. 1885. Paris: Larousse, 2008. p.14 & pp.366-68; Philippe Bonnefis in Guy de Maupassant. *Bel-Ami*. 1885. « Présentation ». p.ix. Paris : Le Livre de Poche, 2013 (Librairie Générale Française, 1983); Gilles Ernst in Guy de Maupassant. *La Parure*. 1884. « Présentation ». Paris : Le Livre de Poche, 2014 (Librairie Générale Française, 1995). pp.17-22 ; Guy de Maupassant. *Contes normands et parisiens*. Paris : Hachette Livre, 1993. Classiques Hachette, Conte XIXe Siècle, no.34. pp. 210-213.

[76] Harris Merton Lyon. "*Sister Carrie*" in Donald Pizer (ed.) Critical Essays on Theodore Dreiser. Boston, Massachusetts: G. K. Hall & Co., 1981. p.163.

[77] *Ibid*. p.162.

> When it came to authors, we again differed slightly, for there were then, besides Conrad, half a dozen whom I admired more or less—as artists, if not as men. But Dreiser, in my hearing, never praised any save Frank Norris, who had whooped up Dreiser's own first novel, "Sister Carrie," and Harris Merton Lyon, a young short-story writer, now forgotten. He also had some respect for Balzac, but not much; I recall that he once declared that all Frenchmen were too ornery for so humane a mortuary tool as the guillotine. He read the Russians but denounced them unanimously as psychopaths of marked homosexual and homicidal tendencies. Dickens he consigned to the bilge deck of his private Gehenna, along with Howells, Henry James and H. G. Wells. Even when it came to Arnold Bennett, who, on landing in New York, had told the gaping reporters that "Sister Carrie" was one of the greatest novels of all time, the most he would concede was that Bennett was probably tight or full of dope at the time, and hence not up to the customary viciousness of an Englishman.[78]

Dreiser mentions among the French novelists who marked him only Balzac, yet he is also known to have been under the influence of High Romantics and Victorians, and some authors who had a "special impact" on him, like "the naturalist thinkers, such as Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and Thomas Huxley, as well as the novelists Thomas Hardy and Honoré de Balzac", an impact that could be seen in a "Reflections" column he held in *Ev'ry Month*, the magazine of an art company he worked with.[79] Of Zola, Flaubert and Maupassant, there is no mention. Yet, in his private library, Dreiser had a good number of

[78]Henry Louis Mencken. « Memories of a Long Life » in Joshi, S. T. (ed.), *Mencken on Mencken, A New Collection of Autobiographical Writings*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010, pp.70-1.
[79] Thomas P. Riggio, *Biography of Theodore Dreiser***,** 2000.
<https://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/dreiser/tdbio.html>

the writings of H. L. Mencken, some works by Balzac, including *Le Père Goriot*, the works of Maupassant, and the works of Zola, including *Nana* (1880), *Germinal* (1885), and *L'Assommoir* (1877).[80] And since he had Maupassant's works as part of his private collection (bearing in mind that Maupassant was a friend of Joris-Karl Huysmans'), one may be inclined to believe that the title of his first novel, *Sister Carrie*, has French roots. Indeed, Huysmans' admiration for the Goncourt brothers, especially for Edmond, was overtly claimed, and so was his influence by the brothers' works. Huysmans' *Les Soeurs Vatard* (1879) takes much from the style and the content –though with a difference– of the Goncourt's *Soeur Philomène* (1861). There is a development in subject matter from the life story of a religious nurse to the life of the destitute and fallen women. Dreiser's Carrie may have come as a continuity to this theme, with an ironic title though since the heroine is not that religious traditional woman of the Goncourt's text.

As to Zola's influence on Dreiser, reviewers of his *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911) "found literary sources in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles,* Flaubert's *Madame Bovary,* Zola's *Nana,* George Moore's *Esther Waters,* and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina."*[81] But *Nana* is not the only novel by Zola that we believe has helped shape Dreiser's fiction. Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* is generally, and paradoxically enough, excluded from studies on the author's naturalism, the reason being that it is among his first novels and it precedes his Rougon-Macquart encyclopaedic socio-biological late nineteenth-century study of the French

[80] Roark Mulligan. 'Theodore Dreiser's Private Library'**.** Originally published in *Dreiser Studies* 33.2 (2002): 40-76. Republished on *Dreiser Web Source* by permission of the author and *Dreiser Studies*.
<http://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/dreiser/library/mulligan.html>
[81]Jerome Loving. *The Last Titan, A Life of Theodore Dreiser*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2005. "Chapter Nine: Return of the Novelist." p.206.

family. Given the fact that it was only in 1880 that the writer coined the term for what was then the literary movement born out of realism and sciences, which is naturalism, this novel did not figure at the centre of naturalistic concern. With careful attention, however, one would find significant material that may constitute the ground of research and analysis on the subject.

We may take the example of the interaction between *Thérèse Raquin* and Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. The structure of Zola's novel is identical to that of Dreiser in many respects. In terms of plot, both novels devote an important space to the background of the protagonists, Thérèse and Clyde, which serves mainly the determinist function of the milieu. Chapter eleven of Zola's book, which contains the crime on the River Seine, can be likened to Book Two of Dreiser's long novel due to the detailed descriptions of cold autumn nature abounding with death symbols. These descriptions follow the crime plan and precede the crime itself. The nature of the crime Thérèse and her lover, Laurent, plan against Camille is the same as Clyde Griffiths' planned murder of Roberta in the isolated Lakes region. Both murders involve the capsizing of boats leaving Camille and Roberta, who do not swim, to drown. In addition, the idea of murder planning arose, in both texts, from external sources: Laurent was inspired by a crime story the retired police officer Michaud told him; Clyde was inspired by a tragic event he had read on the newspaper (a real story –the Chester Gillette case– that inspired Dreiser, actually). The mood in the two novels reminds us much of Maupassant's *Sur l'eau*. What is interesting to mention here is that the reception of Zola's novel and Dreiser's early fiction (prior to *An American Tragedy*, 1925) by some literary critics had, at a particular moment in time, been the

same. Ferragus's (Zola's earlier friend) repulsion with the 'rottenness' of his naturalism is quite that of Stuart Pratt Sherman, whose disgust with Dreiser's texts took the form of a wild attack published in an essay entitled "The Barbarous Naturalism of Mr. Dreiser" (1917). *SC*, on the other hand, holds flashes from both Zola's *Au Bonheur des Dames*, mainly as concerns consumerism, shopping items and stores as well as Maupassant's *Bel-Ami* (the name Duroy rings with Drouet and the two male characters share a lot of features).

For authors like Sinclair Lewis, influence by the French naturalists is not obvious and despite the fact that "... a touch of Flaubert's Emma and Ibsen's Nora cling to Carol"[82] (his heroine in *MS*), the author denied being influenced by *MB*.

As regards the interaction between the texts of Zola and Stephen Crane, and before tackling the sources that might have inspired the latter, it would be of interest to see his own influence on other contemporaries and later fellow writers. John Berryman mentions some of them:

> More interesting by a good deal is the influence he exerted, great and distinct upon Conrad, Willa Cather, Ernest Hemingway, very decided upon others of his contemporaries and then upon Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Carl Sandburg, even Sinclair Lewis, as well as T. E. Lawrence, F. Scott Fitzgerald, more recent figures.[83]

[82]Morris Dickstein. Introduction to *Main Street* by Sinclair Lewis. New York: Bantam Classics, 2008 (1920). p.xix
[83]John Berryman. 'Crane's Art'. From *Stephen Crane*. pp.263-293. 1950, William Sloane Associates. Cited in *Stephen Crane*. Harold Bloom (ed.). New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007. p.08.

Among the numerous critics who claim that Zola is present in the works of Crane is Harold Bloom, who confirms the statement and explains further the difference between both authors when he says that "Zola, whose influence seems strong in *Maggie*, actually created a visionary naturalism, more phantasmagoric than realistic. Crane, impressionist and ironist, goes even further in *Maggie*, a laconic experiment in word-painting."[84] Robert M. Dowling also traces back *Maggie* to Zola when saying that "Maggie Johnson is, among other things, used as a control in the Zolaesque experiment of looking at the New York popular theater as a means of understanding both the issue of class cultural consciousness and the popularized understanding of womanhood."[85]

In fact, Zola's presence in the works of Crane, mainly in *Maggie*, is visible through elements from different novels written by the French father of naturalism. *Nana*, whose protagonist is a young 'girl' who turns into a prostitute due to both biological and social determinist factors (poor and violent alcoholic parents), reminds us much of Maggie Johnson, who is led by the forces of the city, the society and heredity to become a prostitute as well. But if Zola's *L'Assommoir* (and its sequel, *Nana*) is the most commonly cited influence on Crane's work, *Thérèse Raquin* is, indeed, obviously present in *Maggie*, at least in terms of plot, theme, mood and structure. The first pages of Crane's novel depict the miserable conditions of New York slums and their inhabitants; we are given a detailed account of the way the poor live, including their houses and their

[84]Harold Bloom (ed.). *Stephen Crane, Bloom's Modern Critical Views*. "Introduction". New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007. p.4.
[85]Robert M. Dowling. "Stephen Crane and the Transformation of the Bowery". In Harold Bloom (ed.). *Stephen Crane, Bloom's Modern Critical Views*. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007. p.158.

children. The two neighbourhoods described, namely Rum Alley and Devil's Row are pitiful (in)humane districts, where violence, gloom and dirt predominantly reign. The buildings are not better for they too are filthy and dark. Similarly, Zola's novel starts with passages describing the narrow, damp and dusty street in Paris, not far from the River Seine, where the heroine lives with her aunt and husband. Both beginnings are foretelling of the two female protagonists' future, which, here again, reminds much of the beginning of Maupassant's *La Parure*. Indeed, both Maggie and Thérèse are doomed to perish. The first descends the abyss of urban life when she surrenders to Pete's tempting adulterous proposals and later turns to prostitution; the second engages into a risky adultery with her husband's (Camille) friend, Laurent, before turning to a planned murder she and her lover execute on the fragile husband. Both heroines end up committing suicide, just like Flaubert's Emma Bovary. Thus, in the novels, one can clearly notice the environmental determinism, that in which the milieu (whether natural, urban, or social) acts as a squeezing force against the individual's will.

We have also noticed that comparative studies between Zola's and Crane's shorter fictions have not been led so far, while considering carefully both authors' short stories shows that the former may well have influenced Crane's texts. Zola's two collections of short stories, *Nouvelles Roses* and *Nouvelles Noires* (written between 1875 and 1880, and published in 1882 and 1885) had a direct impact on the style and subject matter of Crane's "An Experiment in Luxury" and "An Experiment in Misery" (both published in *The New York Press* in 1894, and later in *The Open Boat*).

As to the work by Zola that remains the most confirmed source of inspiration for Crane in *Maggie*, many critics cite *L'Assommoir*:

> Various literary critics have located Crane's sources in French novels of the slums; specifically, they have noticed extensive similarities between Crane's *Maggie* and Zola's *L'Assommoir,* which appeared in an American translation in 1879. Lars Ahnebrink, for instance, finds that "Crane was indebted to *L'Assommoir* . . . as to plot, characterization, technique, episodes and particulars." But (…) the Frenchman's protagonist, Nana, "était dans le vice comme un poisson dans 1'eau" ("was in vice like a fish in water"), and his description of Nana's coworkers focuses particularly on their moral decay. As Ahnebrink admits, on the subject of moral decay, "Crane showed more restraint" than Zola (Lars Ahnebrink, "Zola as Literary Model for *Maggie"* in Gullason, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets,* pp. 92-93).[86]

Despite this repeatedly mentioned influence of Zola's most prominent nineteenth-century slum novel, critics have insisted on the fact that Crane went even further than Zola in terms of objectivity, style, and morality.

Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* is another intertext of Zola's novels. The Influential texts worth mentioning are *L'Assommoir* (regarding the description of life in slums), *Germinal* (for the revolutionary aspect of the novel as well as the depiction of the working-class life and conditions)*, Le Ventre de Paris* (concerning the 'rotten' aspect of the urban markets) and *La Bête humaine* (for the animal drives of individuals and the drawbacks of the 'machine'). Quoting Sinclair about his novel, Jon A. Yoder reports that "*The Jungle,* (…)

[86]Keith Gandal. *The Virtues of the Vicious, Jacob Riis, Stephen Crane and the Spectacle of the Slum.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. Note no. 76, pp. 153-4.

was "written from the inside . . . the result of an attempt to combine the best of two widely different schools; to put the content of Shelley into the form of Zola.""[87] Moreover, Sinclair's list of ""Socialist" writers included Björnsen, Maeterlinck, Sudermann, Hauptmann, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Zola, Gorky, "even Mr. Bernard Shaw" (…)."[88] Zola's impact on the writer is, thus, evident. However, this impact does not just operate at the structural level of the literary work, as suggested by R. N. Mookerjee.[89] It occurs at a much deeper level; it actually reveals the French author's presence in the psyche of the American one. This can be clearly noticed in Sinclair's much autobiographical *Journal of Arthur Stirling* (1902), in which the protagonist, a poet, strongly wishes he could make himself "another Zola" in order to "put into a book all the rage and all the hate and all the infamy"[90] of such sordid experiences as living in shabby boarding houses, with unwelcoming landladies, gloomy corridors, and unprepossessing tenants. Critic Morris Dickstein also traces back Sinclair's socialist novel to Zola's *Germinal* (among other influences such as Jack London), which deals with the issues the French Northern miners faced, since the "industrial novels of mid-Victorian England, like Dickens's *Hard Times,* were a significant breakthrough but they often gave vague and idealized portraits of

---

[87]Jon A. Yoder, "The Muckraker" in Harold Bloom (ed.). *Upton Sinclair's* The Jungle*, Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers- Infobase Publishing, 2002. p.12.

[88]Michael Brewster Folsom, "Upton Sinclair's Escape from *The Jungle*" in Harold Bloom (ed.). *Upton Sinclair's* The Jungle*, Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers- Infobase Publishing, 2002. p.23.

[89] R. N. Mookerjee claims that "In structuring his novel, Sinclair adapted the basic pattern of Zola." R. N. Mookerjee, "Muckraking and Fame: *The Jungle*" in Harold Bloom (ed.). *Upton Sinclair's* The Jungle*, Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers- Infobase Publishing, 2002. p.78.

[90] Michael Brewster Folsom, "Upton Sinclair's Escape from *The Jungle*" in Harold Bloom (ed.). *Upton Sinclair's* The Jungle*, Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers- Infobase Publishing, 2002. p.24.

working-class characters."[91] In other words, according to Dickstein, Sinclair went further than just depicting superficially and unrealistically the urban milieu of his time and its characters in a mid-Victorian England way. He walked, instead, in the footsteps of Zola in his carefully crafted examination of such metropolitan milieu and its dehumanising effects on its inhabitants. A consideration of *Germinal*'s and *The Jungle'*s endings, describing scenes of lower-class workers' revolt and foretelling a change by and in favour of the proletariat, allows one to easily make the connection between the two novels. Dickstein's assertion is confirmed by critic Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin, who also points, in a detailed account, at the massive presence of Zola in many novelistic aspects of Sinclair's as well as London's literary works.[92]

American realist (and naturalist) authors are, however, not the only ones to have been under the impact of such a great author as Zola. Indeed, the presence of the latter in many prominent African fictional texts is worth mentioning. This influence concerns at least three African writers selected in our corpus, namely Paton, Ekwensi, and Ngugi. It would be important, nevertheless, to start with the case of Achebe, who seems to be the least among our authors to be inspired by the French naturalist pioneer. In fact, Achebe is regarded by most critics of African literature as the forefather, and rather the founder, of African written fiction. Although his texts -at least in the form and the genre- bear European elements since, and as mentioned earlier on in this chapter, the novel is a

---

[91] Morris Dickstein, "Introduction to *The Jungle*" in Harold Bloom (ed.). *Upton Sinclair's* The Jungle*, Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers- Infobase Publishing, 2002. p.52.

[92]Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin, "*The Call of the Wild* and *The Jungle*: Jack London's and Upton Sinclair's Animal and Human Jungles" in Harold Bloom (ed.). *Upton Sinclair's* The Jungle*, Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers- Infobase Publishing, 2002. pp.99-123; and also in Donald Pizer, *The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism, Howells to London*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995 (2006). pp.236-262.

European-born genre, the themes he tackles in his fiction as well as his writing style are typical of him. For him, writing fiction was a means to 'correct' stereotypes about African peoples, their cultures and their civilisations, and to do so, a typically African author needed to be original and, therefore, to use African elements in his writings so as to render African realities in the best way possible. In broader terms, authenticity –or realism– lies in originality. Achebe's fiction is known to reject elements which are foreign to Nigerian –and thus, African– culture and context. Most of his literary works are responses to European, mainly British, fictional texts dealing with the African colonial context. But if the writer's committed fiction and literary criticism "writes back"[93] mostly to Joseph Conrad, his remarks target a larger number of traditionally established non-African literary canons:

> Among the literary "immortals" who have been cut down to size by his witty strokes are Brecht, Conrad, T.S. Eliot, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gogol, Hemingway, Henry James, Joyce, Kipling, Milton, Pope, Pound, Sartre, Shakespeare, Stendhal, Voltaire, Wilde, Wordsworth and Zola. Needless to say, this places Achebe in very distinguished company indeed. But in one respect he is ahead of all the rest. Achebe is the only author in the entire group shown seated before a computer.[94]

Yet, the fact that he issued criticism towards Zola, among these literary giants, also means that the French naturalist's works have been well read, if not digested. Therefore, this

[93] The expression is taken from Bill Ashcroft's et.al. *The Empire Writes Back*.
[94] Bernth Lindfors. "Towards an Achebe Iconography." In *African Textualities –Texts, Pre-Texts and Contexts of African Literature*. Trenton, NJ & Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 1997. p.111.

falls in the scope of indirect influence since it can only be translated as a phenomenon occurring at an unconscious level, and should thus be explained in terms of psychoanalysis. This takes us back to Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence* and the idea of the author's unconscious self-pressure of being under the weight of his literary predecessors and the burden of the past. Just like Dreiser, who 'rejected' all French writers but Balzac (as quoted by H. L. Mencken earlier on in this chapter) but whose fiction bears obvious traces of literary influence by Flaubert and Zola, Achebe ends up –unconsciously– putting in Zolian elements in *NLE* in spite of his criticism of the French author. We may find reminiscences of *L'Argent* as regards themes like corruption and political plotting in the urban milieu, and also some likenesses in stylistic and literary devices, mainly imagery (animal imagery, rottenness, and the urban jungle concept, all related to the city), reminding much of *Thérèse Raquin*, *Germinal*, and *Le Ventre de Paris*. Consequently, we may be tempted to think that an author's 'rejection' of another fellow author's works (or their own person) is, in itself, a form of influence taking shape in a response or a reaction.

However, if for Achebe inspiration by Zola's works is less obvious and more difficult to 'prove', it can easily be noticed in Paton's, Ekwensi's, and Ngugi's fiction, more precisely in the novels dealt with as the primary sources of this research work. Paton's *CBC* is proven to be built on the French tradition of realism (more precisely, of naturalism). According to Christopher Heywood,

> Paton's observation of the Zulu community remains exterior, written within the tradition of realism that developed out of rural and city experience in the nineteenth century. As Peter Alexander has shown, the

> literary models for *Cry, the Beloved Country* were novels by Knut Hamsun, Steinbeck, and Richard Wright.**[12]** This tradition began with the novels on industrial and urban themes by Emile Zola, notably *L'Assommoir*, *La terre*, and *Germinal*.[95]

Thus, the realistic ground on which *CBC* is constructed can be traced back to Zola's novels of the city (although in *Germinal* the milieu of the miners is rural with urban features), at least in terms of the dominant themes. The idea of the city, the big metropolis with its wonders and mazes and traps, is developed in such a way as to allow the reader to easily draw a parallel between both texts. It is mainly its dehumanising aspect and its determinist nature that are at the heart of a plausible comparative study of both novels. The depiction of corruption (mainly, political and moral) in Paris and Johannesburg as well as the socio-economic injustices the poor and the natives suffer from in these two cities is strikingly similar, even if the ending of *CBC* offers an optimistic horizon since the novel closes with a promise of reconciliation between the races and their forthcoming socio-economic cooperation (a positive touch with which *Germinal* –however dark it may be– also ends), while Zola's *L'Assommoir* closes with the same deterministic cycle of misery-alcoholism-prostitution-death, which will open the story of its sequel, *Nana*.

In support of Heywood's idea of Zola's impact on Paton's work, we can mention Kristof Haavik's comparative study in an article that makes the link between Zola's fiction and most African novels, and demonstrates that the former is the source of the latter in many respects, the most significant of which is the depiction of the dark urban

[95]Christopher Heywood. "Part I: Towards Sharpeville –Chapter Five: Fiction of resistance and protest: Bosman to Mphahlele." In A *History of South African Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. p.123.

atmosphere and its effects on the individual. Among the novels of Zola that Haavik asserts to have had a direct influence on the literary works of African writers, *L'Assommoir* is the one that "best captures the sense of worry in the face of an unfamiliar and vaguely threatening environment that many post-colonial writers express."[96] Haavik includes in his study Paton's *CBC* as one of post-colonial texts shaped directly by Zola's naturalistic fiction. Here again, we have a parallel between Johannesburg and Paris –and between Zulu minister Stephen Kumalo and Gervaise– as regards themes like the city's hostility towards Man and moral decay caused by its forces. In relation to both protagonists, Haavik writes

> In Alan Paton's *Cry, The Beloved Country*, a Zulu clergyman from the hinterland is as bewildered by Johannesburg as Gervaise is by Paris: "He sees great high buildings, there are red and green lights on them, almost as tall as the buildings. They go on and off. [...] Black and white, it says, black and white, though it is red and green. It is too much to understand. He is silent, his head aches, he is afraid." (Ref.14)[97]

Further on in his article (p.5), the critic makes the connection again between *CBC* and *L'Assommoir* as concerns the city's corrupting influence and vices. Just like Gervaise's husband, who goes down the abyss and ultimately becomes a drunkard, and her daughter Nana, who turns to prostitution, Stephen Kumalo's sister, Gertrude, leaves her virtuous –and highly religious– native rural environment for the metropolis where she too takes on

[96]Kristof Haavik. "Zola's Post-Colonial City." *Excavatio*, Vol. XXV, 2015. p.4.
[97]*Idem.*

the life of a prostitute. Absalom, Kumalo's son, is soon trapped in the wave of violence characterising Johannesburg, joins a criminal gang and is convicted of and executed for a white pacifist's murder during a robbery in the house of the latter. In general, and even though Zola's presence in the novel of Paton is noticeable, the influence of the former is not overtly acknowledged by the latter.

Perhaps the most direct cases of literary inspiration by the French naturalist in our African corpus are Ekwensi's and Ngugi's. Indeed, Ekwensi's novel title says it all. The heroine of his *Jagua Nana*, who is actually "la Nana de Zola,"[98] reminds much of the French naturalist's female protagonist in *Nana*. Emmanuel Obiechina stresses the fact that "Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana* probably owes its origin to Zola's *Nana.*"[99] But it would be quite important to mention here that Ekwensi was not only inspired by Zola's sequel to *L'Assommoir* and its main character's –Gervaise's– daughter. In fact, two other writers, Alfred Sirven and Henri Leverdier, wrote a novel entitled *Nana's Daughter: A Story of Parisian Life* (1880)[100] in an attempt to deconstruct the biological (hereditary) and social (environmental) determinism as the dominant theme in Zola's novel. Their version gives a reversed story of the original Nana (Gervaise's daughter), here Nana's own daughter, who grows into a decent woman despite the conditions of her upbringing and her 'shabby' background. Similarly, Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana's Daughter* (1986) does more than just reproduce Zola's Nana, the daughter of Gervaise in *L'Assommoir*. On the contrary, it

[98]Jacqueline Bardolph. *Ngugi wa Thiong'o, l'homme et l'œuvre*. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1991. p.135.
[99]Emmanuel Obiechina. *Culture, Tradition and Society in the West African Novel*. Part II: Domestication of the Novel in West Africa, Chapter 4- Characterization. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980 (1975).p. 104.
[100]*La fille de Nana, réponse au roman naturaliste de Zola,* or *La Fille de Nana, roman de mœurs Parisiennes*.

> extends and completes the unfinished story of Jagua Nana. It is partly a response to the negative criticism of the earlier book (…). In contrast to her mother, Jagua, however, we never see Liza abused in any way. We see her first as the educated lawyer mistress of Saka Jojo, a rich businessman who has three wives who do not collectively satisfy his sexual appetites.[101]

In other words, Jagua Nana's daughter is 'better' than her mother although the adjective takes here a different connotation than that of Nana's daughter in Sirven's and Leverdier's literary response to Zola. Emmanuel Obiechina also puts forward the idea that Ekwensi's Jagua Nana cannot be said to be the replica of Zola's Nana. He says that it "seems pure distortion to compare her as Professor Echeruo does with Zola's Nana, "a brutal fille without a conscience or a soul"""[102] because

> (...) where Zola is using the conventional French conception of realism in the novel as a mode of expressing low life for its own sake (which embodies a glorification of tough cynicism and carnal extremism), Ekwensi's writing has no such dogmatic bearing but is preoccupied with exploring, through individuals like Jagua, contemporary urban manifestations like obsessive materialism, crime, violence and prostitution, which are essentially products of a particular changing social scene.[103]

[101]Chinyere Nwahunanya, 'Chapter twenty-seven: Jagua Nana's Children: The Image of the Prostitute in Post Colonial African Literature.' In Ngozi Ezenwa-Ohaeto & Ifeyinwa J. Ogbazi (eds.) *In the Perspectives of Language and Literature: Essays in Honour of R.U. Uzoezie*. Nimo, Nigeria: Rex Charles and Patrick Ltd., 2011. p.345.

[102]Emmanuel Obiechina. *Op.cit*. Obiechina quotes Echeruo in *Nigeria Magazine* No. 75 (December, 1962), pp. 63-6.

[103]Emmanuel Obiechina *Op.cit*.

Yet, in terms of themes (political corruption), style (naturalistic descriptions), and literary devices, mainly imagery (animal imagery, rottenness), Zola's imprint (*L'Argent*, *L'Assommoir*, and *Le Ventre de Paris*) can clearly be seen in Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana*.

But if Ekwensi does not overtly admit his influence by Zola, Ngugi remains the only author to be discussed here who has, on many occasions, declared that the French naturalist was among his most notable sources of inspiration. Instances of such declarations abound in articles about and transcripts of interviews with this African writer. There is, first, a parallel one can draw between the representation of the city of Paris in Zola's *L'Assommoir* and that of Nairobi in Ngugi's *Weep Not, Child*. The image of the metropolis reflected in these two works of fiction is that of a dehumanising Darwinian milieu where strangers to the city (especially provincials and natives) would be frightened not only by its large size but also and mainly by its crowd.[104] Ngugi's penchant for nineteenth-century European novelists can be found in the various interviews that include frequent questions about his literary tastes. In general, he admits he likes reading Balzac and Zola among the French, but also Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Turgenev, and Gorky among the Russians. In his own prison diary, he lists down the works that have kept him company during his imprisonment:

> I am happy, though, for a prison reunion with Voltaire; Balzac; Moliere; Zola; Flaubert; Tolstoy; Chekhov; Gorky; Sembene Ousmane; Shakespeare; Bertrand

[104]See Kristof Haavik. "Zola's Post-Colonial City." *Excavatio*, Vol. XXV, 2015. p.4.

> Russell; Claude McKay; and to make new acquaintances like Amadi and Thomas Mann.[105]

In a series of collected interviews given to R. Sander, B. Lindfors and L. Cintrón, Ngugi praises Balzac's powerful realism. For him, 'no amount of reading of French history of the period can give one the same amount of clarity of the relationships between the various social forces than you get in Balzac.'[106] And, in answer to a question on a possible influence on him by a European author, he says, 'I admire certain aspects of European literature: Shakespeare, Balzac, Zola, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Brecht (…).'[107] His influence by Zola is further emphasised by Paul Berman's review of *Petals of Blood* presented in the *New Republic*, in January 1979, 'suggesting that the plot "leans heavily on coincidence," the "Zola-esque" qualities viewed as positive.'[108] Ngugi goes as far as to declare, 'If I was to start writing all over again, I would write like *Zola* and not like Lawrence.'[109] Last but not least, one can have a full grasp of Ngugi's whole body of influences in an interview given to Kenneth Parker, where he declares:

> I had two types of education. Before I went to school, I was a product of the Gikuyu people, that is, every evening in my mother's house we would be told stories and we would later become story tellers. This was part of the oral education. When I went to school I came into contact with another kind of tradition, introduced by the

[105]Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*. London: Heinemann, 1989 (1981), Section One: Prison Notes, Chapter Seven. p.132.
[106]Reinhard Sander, Bernth Lindfors, Lynette Cintrón. *Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o Speaks: Interviews with the Kenyan Writer*. Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 2006. p.164.
[107]Reinhard Sander, Bernth Lindfors, Lynette Cintrón. *Ibid*. p.227.
[108]Charles Cantalupo (ed.). *The World of Ngūgī Wa Thiong'o*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1993. p.76.
[109]G. D. Killam. *An Introduction to the Writings of Ngũgĩ.* London & Exeter, N. H.: Heinemann Educational, 1980.p.18.

> colonial education: the Bible, literature written in English — Stevenson, Dickens, and others. When I went to secondary and high schools there was no written literature in African languages available in the schools. So, I was exposed to, if you like, the whole tradition of English literature, from Chaucer to T. S. Eliot. It was also in my last year at University that I came into contact with European (as opposed to English) literature: Balzac, Zola, Flaubert, Voltaire, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and others. I also then encountered American writers as well as African writers: Chinua Achebe, Cyprien Ekwensi, Peter Abrahams, Caribbean writers like George Lamming, Afro-American writers like Richard Wright. So I am a product of both an oral and a Kenyan national tradition and a written international tradition. So when I came to write I could not but be influenced by all these.[110]

The influence of the greatest French realist and naturalist writers on our selected African and American novelists can, therefore, be traced, laying thus the ground for us to interpret the representation of the countryside, the city, and their respective inhabitants, as well as the railway and the train, in the light of their European pioneers' classics. It also allows us to place Zola at the top as the major source of inspiration that is common to the selected authors.

[110]Kenneth Parker. '"CHANNEL FIVE," Interview with Ngugi wa Thiong'o' by Kenneth Parker. In *Marxism Today*. September, 1982. pp.35-6.

C- Rural and Urban Environments in African and American Realistic and Naturalistic Fictions

Owing to the fact that realist and naturalist literatures devote considerable space to the treatment of the changing historical, cultural, and socio-economic conditions all over the world, one expects to see some similarities in the depiction of these realities in literary works referring to different geographical regions. Realism, being born out of a reaction to romantic idealism, corresponds in Europe and America to the historical period witnessing major changes, namely the fruits of the industrial revolution and the great scientific and technological achievements in all fields. With a new scene there must be a new way –at least, literary and artistic– to portray it, romantic values (including a veneration of nature and a call for the representation of transcendent beauty) in literature becoming, thus, irrelevant when the period's writers' concern had already shifted to both the traditional landscape metamorphosis and the establishment of the metropolis as *the* new space par excellence, be it environmental or psychological.

The representation of the countryside, the railway/train, the city, provincials and city dwellers by the authors of the actual corpus is quite akin to that of Zola in his Rougon-Macquart series and *Thérèse Raquin*. Indeed, it may be related to the works of the Groupe de Médan members, namely Guy de Maupassant, Henri Céard, Paul Alexis, and Joris-Karl Huysmans –all of whom were led by Zola, under the mentorship of Flaubert and the massive influence of Balzac.

Among the themes that have been –and still are– dealt with extensively in literary studies is the country-city binary, though, nowadays, it has (on more than one occasion) been deconstructed as a binary and has been considered as a duet, that is, two complementary elements.[111] However, it has not been treated so far in a comparative context between African and American realistic and naturalistic fictions, especially with a focus on the impact Zola had on the selected authors' works of fiction.

This countryside-metropolis binary, which is a very old theme, had been the subject matter of literature from times immemorial. Texts produced in Antiquity –in the Greco-Roman period, for instance– stress the contrast between the two elements by portraying the Empires' City-states and their provinces in quite distinguished ways: the City is the cradle of civilisation and progress while the province is the remote extension where people not fitting with the social, economic and cultural standards of the time live. A variant of this theme is the biblical Pastoral and City upon a hill parallel –or the 'Garden of Eden' and the 'elevated' city– which has long nourished the writings of the Puritans in Europe and America. Interest in this dichotomy has not diminished but has rather kept growing even more in modern times, where the countryside (and what it suggests as towns and village life) has almost lost its natural aspect so much it has been urbanised – the gap having been largely widened by the industrial movement, which allowed the machine (the train and the railway) to serve as a medium, a moving bridge between the two environments: the rural and the urban.

[111] Mark Storey's *Rural Fictions, Urban Realities* deconstructs the idea of the dichotomy "Country and City" (or "Village and Metropolis") and puts forward a new image of the two traditionally opposed entities that can actually come to a reconciliation, provided that people change their perception of the antipodal character attributed to them.

The countryside is present in all genres and categories of literature, including science fiction, fantasy, and urban dystopias, despite the fact that its presence in reality is often a mere reflection of the authors' imagination. Balzac's division of *La Comédie humaine* is evidence of the traditional separation between country and city. His categorisation of the parts of his series into distinguished "scenes" ("Scenes from Provincial Life," "Scenes from Parisian Life," "Scenes from Private Life," to name but a few[112]) inspired the generation of writers that followed his realistic wave and gave it a deeper dimension. Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* bears the subtitle "Provincial Manners," reminding much of the label devised by Balzac. What is striking, however, is to see the extent to which Balzac's novel *The Country Doctor* (1833) had an impact on different authors –French and non-French alike– almost a century after its publication. Novels like Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857), Sarah Orne Jewett's *A Country Doctor* (1884), Zola's *Le Docteur Pascal* (1893), and Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* (1920), as well as Frantz Kafka's short story "A Country Doctor" (1917) derive from Balzac's novel in more than one aspect. In fact, his work initiated a whole literary genre by the beginning of the 19th Century.[113]

Just like his predecessors Balzac and Flaubert, Zola, in his earlier works as well as in his Rougon-Macquart series, displays the contrast between the countryside and the city

[112] Surprisingly enough, William Cooper's 1961 comic novel is entitled *Scenes from Provincial Life*.

[113] Mark Storey, in his *Rural Fictions, Urban Realities*, devotes a whole chapter to the representation of the country doctor in American Gilded Age fiction. In "The Rural Physician or the Ambiguity of Symbols", François Tonnellier explains the importance of Balzac's 1833 novel on the literary production that followed it (See François Tonnellier, "Le Médecin de Campagne ou l'Ambiguïté des Symboles," translated as "The Rural Physician or the Ambiguity of Symbols", *Les Tribunes de la Santé*, Vol.23, Issue 2, 2009, pp.57-63).

(he would often speak about 'large towns' then). Being himself a provincial who headed to Paris at an early age seeking financial improvement, he knew well both the rural environment and the urban milieu. He would minutely depict the city vices –without denying, however, the array of material opportunities it can offer the individual– but he would also paint the miseries and the dullness of village life although he would, at times, express his nostalgia for the small town, which was gradually making way for the metropolis ('Le Petit Village', in *Les Nouveaux Contes à Ninon*, 1874).

It is important here to mention works of criticism on the topic like Richard Slotkin's *The Fatal Environment* and Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden*, both of which discuss the receding place of the American Pastoral in a rapidly-growing urban environment, which relies heavily on the machine, or the train. Laura Wright's *Wilderness into Civilized Shapes*, Toyin Falola's and Emily Brownell's *Landscape, Environment and Technology in African Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, and Roger Chemain's *La Ville dans le roman africain* are not less significant in their treatment of the country and city subject in African literature. But Raymond Williams's *The Country and the City* (1973) probably stands out as the most significant of all due to its relevance half a century after its publication. In an article entitled "From Jane Austen to Zadie Smith – The City v the Country in Literature," Tristram Hunt offers two contrastive views about the rural and the urban environments:

> Policy, polity, politeness, urbanity, civility, derive their names as well as their nature from city life, while the terms rustic, savage, heathen, pagan, indicate the rougher

> and more backward tendencies of the herdsmen and cultivators of the ground," was the considered view of the Liverpool architect and Victorian city booster Sir James Picton. By contrast, in his lurid 1844 pamphlet, "On the Need of Christianity to Cities", the Paddington curate James Shergold Boone struck a different tone: "Cities are the centres and theatres of human ambition, human cupidity and human pleasure … the appetites, the passions, the carnal corruptions of man are forced, as in a hotbed, into a rank and foul luxuriance.[114]

The two views are paradoxical but they reflect the general opinion of city dwellers and countrymen. This paves the way for Hunt to praise Williams's Book, which, for him, is "a beautifully written account of one of the abiding themes of European culture: the construction of the virtue of the rural and the vice of the urban. Rural idiocy versus urban civility."[115] Although the notions of virtue and vice have long been associated respectively with the countryside and the metropolis, the tendency in modern materialistic times has been to reverse the order; it is, therefore, recurrent to see the city as 'virtuous' and the country as 'vicious.' Williams's overt opinion about the topic is quite pragmatic or, one should say, utilitarian:

> But having known the grind of rural poverty, Williams the globe-trotting don, at ease in his Jesus College rooms or a BBC studio, was never a pastoral nostalgic. He regarded the romantic idealisation of settlement as nothing less than privileged indifference to most people's needs. "At home we were glad of the Industrial Revolution, and of its consequent social and political changes." He refused to indulge in any metropolitan disdain towards the liberating, everyday essentials of

[114]Tristram Hunt, "From Jane Austen to Zadie Smith – The City v the Country in Literature," Sat 12 March 2016 12.00 GMT, in <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/12/raymond-williams-the-country-and-the-city-rural-versus-urban>.
[115]*Idem.*

> plumbing, Austin cars, aspirin, contraceptives or canned food. The wretched alternatives were “dirty water, an earth bucket, a four-mile walk each way to work, headaches, broken women, hunger and monotony of diet.[116]

The rural and urban environments’ inherent clash is also that of the ever antagonistic relation between the agrarian and the industrial capitalist systems. If the majority of modern people tend to favour city life over country life for purely materialistic reasons, many others regret the rapidly growing metropolis which swept away the traces of nature that had long kept Man in connection with his primary environment. Such nostalgia had already been expressed in literature that goes back in time as far as to the Roman times when Virgil (70-19 B.C.) praised the countryside, country people and country chores in his *Bucolics* and *Georgics*. The latter is perhaps Antiquity’s most eloquent ode to the province as it sings its agrarian aspect, including land labour, farming and cattle raising. It is actually an ode to the connection between Man and land:

> Virgile évoque toujours avec une grande sympathie le monde rural, préservé de la contamination de la grande ville, Rome. (…) Virgile se fait le chantre des idées de l'empereur Auguste, qui voulait encourager un retour aux anciennes vertus romaines et au terroir d'où elles étaient issues. Les paysans et leur vie sont idéalisés (…).[117]

> Virgil always evokes, with great sympathiy, the rural world, protected from the contamination of the big city,

[116]Tristram Hunt, “From Jane Austen to Zadie Smith – The City v the Country in Literature,” Sat 12 March 2016 12.00 GMT, in <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/12/raymond-williams-the-country-and-the-city-rural-versus-urban>.

[117] ‘Le Monde Rural dans la Littérature Latine.’ In Guy de Maupassant. *Contes Normands et Parisiens*. Paris : Hachette Education- Classiques Hachette N°34, 01-01-2000 (1993). (Bernard Père et Clam). p.223.

> Rome. (…) Virgil claims himself to be the singer of the ideas of Emperor Augustus, who wanted to encourage a return to the old Roman virtues and to the soil from which they sprang. Peasants and their life are idealised (…).[118]

The Latin poet conveys thus the very old idea that the city is indeed corrupting and that the pastoral lands are pure and, mostly, purifying. In his *Georgics*, he roots the 'joys of true life' in Earth:

> O farmers, more than happy if they've realised their blessings, for whom Earth unprompted, supreme in justice, pours out a rich livelihood from her soil, far from the clash of armies! If no tall mansion with proud entrance disgorges a tide of guests at dawn, if they don't gaze at doors inlaid with tortoiseshell, clothes threaded with gold, or bronzes from Ephyra, if their white wool's not dipped in Assyrian dyes, nor the clear oil they use spoiled by rosemary, still there's no lack of tranquil peace, life without deceit, rich in many things, the quiet of broad estates (caves, and natural lakes, and cool valleys, the cattle lowing, and sweet sleep under the trees): they have glades in the woods, and haunts of game, a youth of patient effort, accustomed to hardship, worship of the gods, and respect for old age: Justice, as she left the Earth, planted her last steps among them.[119]

This pastoral quiet, opposed to urban turbulence, is a matter of interest here because of two important points. It is this peace that will paradoxically lead some of the main characters of the realistic and naturalistic corpus novels to go to the city: nothing new ever seems to happen in the countryside; the chores become part of a stifling routine; the hardships are all but interesting; the city with its wonders is a mystery that needs to be

[118]Translation mine.

[119]Virgil, Book II:458-542 'The Joys of the True Life,' in *The Georgics*. A. S. Kline (trans.) 2002. <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasgeorgics.php>. *The Georgics* were composed and published between 37 and 30 B.C., though their exact date of publication is still a matter of debate.

conquered. Dreiser's Carrie Meeber and Bob Ames, Lewis's Carol Milford, Ekwensi's Jagua Nana, and Paton's Gertrude, John and Absalom Kumalo all leave their country homes for the metropolis, seeking novel experiences that would extinguish the ambers of a routine (inherent in the province) which gradually reduces their dreams to ashes. On the other hand, it is this same pastoral quiet that will encourage some of these characters to go back to the source, Mother Nature –or, rather, its residual spots in the province– after having been disillusioned by city life. There is, therefore, the original movement from the East to the West, the subsequent reverse movement from the West to the East, then again a return to the initial movement from the East to the West. This constant movement is, itself, an eternal cycle, a vicious circle expressed by the authors under study as the ebb and flow of life in search of an appropriate spatial landmark, a satisfactory economic status, and, most importantly, psychological stability.

Since new realities require new modes of writing, fitting the period of time in which the novels under focus were published, the selected Realists and Naturalists have cast light more on the 'dull' side of the province and the 'evil' side of the city more than they did on their 'bright' side.[120] This is a logical outcome of influences deriving from the French Realists and Naturalists mentioned earlier on in this chapter, whose texts reveal, in

[120]An example of a change in the representation of the Pastoral according to the difference in the historical context is Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* (Symphony N°6, 1808) and André Gide's *La Symphonie Pastorale* (1919). Indeed, the latter is a perverted version of the Pastoral, as celebrated by the German virtuoso, in the sense that this epistolary novel's central point revolves around a provincial protestant pastor's conflict between faith and sin, religion and feelings/emotions, leading ultimately to the novel's final tragedy (the death of Gertrude –the second major character and the pastor's object of desire– shortly after she recovers sight). Therefore, the beauty of the province expressed by composer's symphony (seen in the idealistic titles of its five movements: 'Awakening of cheerful feelings on arrival in the countryside,' 'Scene by the brook,' 'Merry gathering of country folk,' 'Thunder storm,' 'Shepherd's song. Cheerful and thankful feelings after the storm') is stained by the spiritual flaws of novelist's pastor and his surrender to forbidden temptations.

their turn, the massive presence of Schopenhauer and his philosophy on pessimism as to the representation of life and the real world. It is also noteworthy to examine the ways these authors painted their major characters in relation to their milieu in order to understand their reactions to their surroundings.

Part of this study requires a close examination of some important myths in American and African literatures. The pastoral (or agricultural) and urban myths (rooted back in ancient Greek and Biblical mythology), the myth of the frontier, the wilderness (or virgin land), the 'machine in the garden,' the urban frontier, the fallen woman, as well as concepts relevant to them (the Garden of Eden, Manifest Destiny, Garden-City, Utopias-utopian cities, City-upon-a-hill, dystopias) are included. Parallels with the African context reflected by the novels chosen reveal striking similarities since one can notice the space devoted to the treatment of the machine in the African landscape, the African pastoral (village-town), and the African providence. More striking is the link one can make with the different descriptions of the countryside, the train and the city by Zola, in most of his works. The train, being the medium by which the transition from the pastoral state to the urban state was allowed, deserves due consideration. The machine (or the locomotive), and by extension the train and the railway, is a multi-dimensional element in literature. Accordingly, an iconological study of this transportation means is likely to reveal symbolic layers varying from one author to another, and from one period of time to another.

Ever since its discovery in Europe and its exportation and propagation outside the Old Continent, the train has always been an object of fascination for writers of all genres in

world literatures. It nourished (and still nourishes) their imagination.[121] Its representation in arts and literature abounds. Be it in painting –where it is romanticised and idealised– in music, in cinema, and in letters, the train marked its presence starting from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. In literature, its significance can be seen mainly in detective fiction; a separate genre labelled 'The Railway Novel' appeared in the mid-19th Century. Agatha Christie's *04.50 from Paddington* (1957), *The Mystery of the Blue Train* (1928), and *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934)*,* as well as Graham Greene's *Stamboul Train* (or *Orient Express*)(1932) are but a few examples. It is, however, featured in many other genres too: mystery, children's literature, Gothic and horror, and romantic fiction. As a matter of fact, realistic and naturalistic writers gave, in their turn, a fair amount of space to the machine in their fiction.

There are three broad views of the train that shape how the latter is represented by an author: a romantic/idealistic perception expressing harmony, a pragmatic progressive perception expressing utility, and a naturalistic pessimistic perception expressing destruction. Like Walt Whitman's vision of technological progress, Emily Dickinson's poem singing the train displays her progressive view:

I like to see it lap the Miles —
And lick the Valleys up —
And stop to feed itself at Tanks —
And then — prodigious step

[121]Paula Hawkins's *The Girl on the Train* (2015) and Martin Amis's *Night Train* (1997) are examples of contemporary train novels. Edith Nesbit's *The Railway Children* (1906) is an earlier text from children's literature.

Around a Pile of Mountains —
And supercilious peer
In Shanties — by the sides of Roads —
And then a Quarry pare

To fit its Ribs
And crawl between
Complaining all the while
In horrid — hooting stanza —
Then chase itself down Hill —

And neigh like Boanerges —
Then — punctual as a Star
Stop — docile and omnipotent
At its own stable door —[122]

Dickinson's idealised image of the train, comparing it to an iron horse travelling merrily across a rich and diverse American landscape, is akin to English author Robert Louis Stevenson's 'From a Railway Carriage':

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
And charging along like troops in a battle,
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.

Here is a child who clambers and scrambles,
All by himself and gathering brambles;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;
And there is the green for stringing the daisies!

[122]'The Railway Train,' or 'I Like to See It Lap the Miles', by Emily Dickinson (written 1862, published 1891).

> Here is a cart run away in the road
> Lumping along with man and load;
> And here is a mill and there is a river:
> Each a glimpse and gone for ever![123]

Stevenson also mentions the fast speed at which the train travels amidst hills and meadows and, although the poem might suggest a touch of idealistic nostalgia, the poet makes of his verses' central idea the ephemeral nature of country landscape as perceived from the train. Clifford Dyment, citing Albert Belton, gives a broader dimension to the machine than just the fast pace with which it moves. He portrays it as a means of escape from one's 'misery,' a 'door' one can open whenever they feel hopeless:

> A railway isn't just carriages and a locomotive and a permanent way. It's a sort of door. At any time you can open it and take to the road, turning your back on a home that's dreary and on a life that's a misery to you. Any time you fancy you can whizz off to a new home and a new life, in any place you choose. Whenever you're down in the dumps –just open the door. (Albert Belton cited as an epigraph to the book –note mine.)[124]

Although numerous authors have shared the same rail picture, the focus here will not be on the progressive, optimistic and idealistic view of the train/railway (neither in American literature nor in African literature) since the source of influence offers quite a pessimistic vision of the machine and its effects on the countryside and its people, as well as its role in the drastic transformation of the rural milieu into a purely urbanised and industrialised

[123]Robert Louis Stevenson, 'From a Railway Carriage,' In *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885).
[124]Clifford Dyment. *The Railway Game, An Early Autobiography*. London : J. M. Dent & Sons, Aldine Press, 1962.

environment. The same can be said about the city since our primary concern is the authors' naturalistic depiction of the metropolis and, therefore, emphasis will not be put on the advantages of city life but rather on its less attractive side. Sister Carrie is the only major character who succeeds in the city, displaying thus features of the fittest in her struggle for survival in the ocean-like metropolis, though –as Dreiser points out in the closing paragraph of his Doubleday edition of the novel– her ascension to fame and later success leave her with a taste of dissatisfaction and spiritual lack, confirming the vicious circle of rise and fall and the eternal movement of the ebb and flow.

Just like the train, the city is multi-dimensional. It is true that the metropolis (and modern times megalopolis) can be regarded as a 'liberating space'[125] for minorities, namely African-Americans, allowing them to recover an identity that the traditional rural environment (and the evils it might suggest to them –exploitation, famine, segregation, plantations' hardships) had deprived them of. In his idealistic poem entitled 'My City,' for instance, James Weldon Johnson engages in a daydream about a black metropolis while singing the 'boiling' atmosphere of New York City. The first octave says it plainly that the poet will not miss Nature upon his death, despite the fact that his description of natural elements is tainted with romanticism. He confirms, in the subsequent sestet, that he will rather miss 'his' city, manifesting thus his determination to get hold of an urban space that provides him with an identity which, as an African American, has long been

---

[125]This is part of the first chapter's title in Yoshinobu Hakutani and Robert Butler (eds.) *The City in African American Literature*, London and Toronto : Associated University Presses, 2005. Robert Butler, Chap.1. 'The City as Liberating Space in Life and Times of Frederick Douglas', pp.21-36.

marginalised. This appropriation of a metropolitan milieu is to be further claimed by writers and artists of the Harlem Renaissance, a few decades later:

When I come down t o sleep death's endless night,
The threshold of the unknown dark to cross,
What to me then will be the keenest loss,
When this bright world blurs on my fading sight?
Will it be that no more I shall see the trees
Or smell the flowers or hear the singing birds
Or watch the flashing streams or patient herds?
No, I am sure it will be none of these.

But, ah! Manhattan's sights and sounds, her smells,
Her crowds, her throbbing force, the thrill that comes
From being of her a part, her subtle spells,
Her shining towers, her avenues, her slums—
O God! the stark, unutterable pity,
To be dead, and never again behold my city![126]

However, this new Frontier also incarnates corruption, big new business, the emergence of new classes (mainly wealthy classes), social injustices, a deterministic environment (an urban jungle), if seen from the perspective of the proletariat and the provincials (the poor in America), or the African Natives in the African context. This portrayal of the city as an evil space pervades the African as well as the American novels under study. The American city as depicted by the selected authors can be actually described in the way William Booth summed up Jack London's picturing of London's East End in his *People of the Abyss* (1903) as a place of "hunger, homelessness, suicide, alcoholism, prostitution,

[126]James Weldon Johnson, 'My City'. From *The Book of American Negro Poetry*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922--- ed. by James Weldon Johnson, available at <https://poets.org/poem/my-city> (*The Century Magazine*, 1923).

overcrowding, degradation, and danger that he found on his seven-week journey."[127] This open exposition of city vices is not typical only of American muckrakers and Naturalists ; owing to the committed nature of African literature, Realism and Naturalism seem to be the only modes whereby the city can be dealt with. Speaking about Roger Chemain's *La Ville dans le roman africain* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1982), Marcel Sommer notes that

> 'R. Chemain comprend la littérature africaine surtout comme une littérature engagée (p. 20) qui met en scène la ville africaine afin de démasquer et de critiquer les injustices sociales (p. 276). D'après Chemain, c'est pour cette raison que, dans la littérature africaine, la ville a été traitée dans la plupart des cas d'une manière réaliste et naturaliste (p. 18).'[128]

> 'R. Chemain understands African literature mainly as committed literature (p. 20) that features the African city in order to unveil and criticise social injustices(p. 276). According to Chemain, it is for this reason that, in African literature, the city has been dealt with in the majority of the cases in a realistic and a naturalistic way.[129]

This particular note can be safely extended to Anglophone African literature as we shall see in Chapter Three.

The selected corpus is divided into two broad categories: novels of the Countryside and the City, and novels of the City. The first category includes *Cry, the Beloved Country*,

[127]Joseph McLaughlin, 'Chapter 5: Writing London: East End Ethnography in Jack London's *The People of the Abyss*,' In *Writing the Urban Jungle, Reading Empire in London from Doyle to Eliot*. Charlottesville and London: The University Press of Virginia, 2000. p.104

[128]Marcel Sommer. *Les Villes et les livres; l'image de la ville dans la littérature africaine francophone*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007. 'Introduction,' p.10.

[129]Translation mine.

Petals of Blood, and *Main Street*. There is a parallel of the two elements in each novel (respectively, Natal –Ixopo– Vs Johannesburg, Ilmorog Vs Nairobi, Gopher Prairie, Minnesota Vs Washington D.C.). The second category comprises *Jagua Nana*, *No Longer at Ease*, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, *The Jungle*, and *Sister Carrie*. For *Jagua Nana* and *No Longer at Ease*, there are many descriptions of the countryside (small town and village in *Jagua Nana* –Bagana, Krinameh and Ogabu– and in *No Longer at Ease*– Umuofia, Iguedo), but the city of Lagos dominates both novels. In *Maggie*, *The Jungle* and *Sister Carrie*, the city prevails (Chicago and New York).

Here again, whether it is the African city or the American city, the link with Zola's works is a priority since the primary aim of this research is to trace back the representation of the countryside, the train and the city by our corpus authors to the French Naturalist. Such influence is inevitable since, as Marc Bernard points out

> '... *Thérèse Raquin*, *L'Assommoir*, *Nana*, *Germinal* et *La Bête Humaine* ne fléchiront pas; ces romans sont dignes de rester.'
> 'Quant à l'influence de Zola, elle est incontestable, non seulement en France mais dans toute la literature mondiale. Il est peu de romanciers actuels qui ne lui doivent quelque chose, même lorsqu'ils n'en savent rien. Zola nous a donné le goût d'une réalité forte et le courage de la montrer. Ainsi que le dit Nietzsche, nous sommes devenus à son exemple "plus cyniques, mais plus francs".'[130]

[130]Marc Bernard. 'Zola Posthume' in *Zola par lui-même*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1952. (pp.167-172), p.167.

> '... *Thérèse Raquin*, *L'Assommoir*, *Nana*, *Germinal* et *La Bête Humaine* will not flinch; these novels are worthy to everlast.'
>
> 'As to the influence of Zola, it is undeniable, not only in France but in the whole body of world literature. Rare are the contemporary authors that do not owe him something, even if they are not aware of it. Zola gave us the taste of a strong reality and the courage to show it. As Nietzsche says, we have become, just like him, "more cynical, but more frank".'[131]

He further adds, citing Upton Sinclair, that 'L'œuvre de Zola est un des grands monuments de la littérature mondiale'[132] ('The work of Zola is one of the biggest landmarks of world literature').[133]

In the next chapters, we shall examine the ways in which French naturalism –Zola, in particular– has made an impact on a host of fiction writers, whether they be Europeans, Americans or Africans. The novels selected for study all bear the marks of naturalism, while they also reflect the terrains and social situations which have determined the naturalist mode of writing.

[131]Translation mine.
[132]Marc Bernard. *Zola par lui-même*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1952. p.181
[133]Translation mine.

Chapter Two

The Countryside and the Forgotten Past

There is no measure: equal importance is given to everything, and therefore too much to anything. For the things of the past are never viewed in their true perspective or receive their just value; but value and perspective change with the individual or the nation that is looking back on its past.

Nietzsche*, On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*.

L'état où l'homme se trouve le plus heureux est l'état intermédiaire entre le primitif et le raffiné, ou entre la sauvagerie et le luxe.

Richard Price, 1785.

We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us.

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1854)

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the rural environment, also referred to here as the countryside, the province or the pastoral. This includes farms and villages. The rural environment is particularly contrasted to the city due to the ever-persisting clash between the agrarian and the industrial world. Our aim, in this chapter, is to reveal the realistic and naturalistic faces of the countryside, that is, respectively, its dull and stifling aspect, as well as its highly repulsive quality which becomes a danger for the psychological stability of its dwellers. Another fact that can be observed is the contrast between the 'romantic' village and the 'realistic' village presented in the selected American novels, and the contrast between the traditional village and the modern village portrayed in the selected African works.

In the American and African novels concerned, the countryside is, respectively, the American Midwest and the rural areas of South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya. The American Midwest is the central area of the United States extending from the Ohio River to the Rocky Mountains, including the Prairie (the central farming area) and the Great Plains region. In *Sister Carrie*, it is in the state of Wisconsin and, more precisely, in the fictitious Columbia City. In *The Jungle*, it is in the rural suburbs of Chicago while, in *Main Street*, it is in the fictitious village of Gopher Prairie, Minnesota. *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* is excluded from this study here since it is set solely in the city of New York, the initial novel subtitle being 'A Story of New York.' In the selected African novels, our concern will be with Iguedo, Umuofia (*NLE*), Ogabu (*JN*), Ixopo, Natal (*CBC*) and Ilmorog (*PB*).

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section, entitled 'The Countryside: This "Ragged Edge of the Universe"', deals with the province as an insignificant spot, so insignificant that it draws no attention to it. It is, indeed, a devalued place characterised by dullness and degradation, flagrantly antipodal to the once virtuous green region where land labour and the farmer figure were sacred. It is quintessential thus to draw a parallel with its modern time state and what it used to be in nineteenth-century America and pre-colonial Africa.

The next section, entitled The "Machine in the Garden": A Tempting Snake or a "Celestial Railroad"?', discusses how the capitalist system's most revolutionary instrument has led to the collapse of the pastoral, in both continents, as reflected by the corpus novels. The deterioration and devaluation of the province was fatal both on an individual and a national scale. Indeed, the introduction of the machine in the American natural environment (it is rather seen as an intrusion and a 'territorial rape' of the African rural environment) ultimately destroyed the American Garden of Eden and the African Mother Nature. The train and the railway industry made both events irremediable.

The third section of this chapter, entitled 'The Waste Land: The Pastoral as "Ashland"', examines the final stage of the province's deterioration, its reduction to 'ashes,' and the effects of its loss on country people. The death of the pastoral and the tribal lands had tragic effects on the psyche of the provincials and the villagers. The characters' response to this agrarian tragedy took form in a journey to the new frontier with its metallic promises: the city. This exodus out of the country and towards the

metropolis will vary as some characters will be trapped in the city while others will return 'home.'

A- The Countryside: This "Ragged Edge of the Universe"

The significance of Nature, be it in America or in Africa, is undeniable. The pastoral, symbolising resources, wealth, and identity, was so sacred that land labourers were almost worshipped. The greed of industrial and financial capitalism and the rapidity with which its servant (the locomotive) penetrated remote natural and rural areas, causing damages to both the panorama and the local inhabitants, did not give time to the latter to grasp what was happening to their homelands. This speed is itself shocking. Such shock and sadness at the disappearance of the small village is beautifully expressed in the passage taken from Zola's 'Le Petit Village':

> Où est-il, le petit village? Dans quel pli de terrain cache-t-il ses maisons blanches? Se groupent-elles autour de l'église, au fond de quelque creux? ou, le long d'une grande route, s'en vont-elles gaiement à la file? ou encore grimpent-elles sur un coteau, comme des chèvres capricieuses, étageant et cachant à demi leurs toits rouges dans les verdures? (p.138)
> (…) Aucun de nous ne le connaît. La ville voisine sait à peine qu'il existe, et il est si humble que pas un géographe ne s'est soucié de lui. Ce n'est personne. Son nom prononcé n'éveille aucun souvenir. Dans la foule des villes, aux noms retentissants, il est un inconnu, sans histoire, sans gloires et sans hontes, qui s'efface modestement. (p.140)[1]

[1]Emile Zola, 'Le Petit Village', In *Les Nouveaux contes à Ninon*, 1874. Québec : BEQ Jean-Yves Dupuis, Vol. 226. PDF. (Paris : G. Charpentier, 1879) 'Le Petit Village' referred to here is the small village of Woerth, in Alsace, France.

In the selected novels, some of the key characters, still attached to rural areas, feel nostalgia at the loss of the province. They ultimately decide to go back to the countryside in search of purity and authenticity. We can mention Bob Ames, Carol Kennicott, Jagua Nana and the key characters in *Petals of Blood* among these nostalgic provincials with urban experiences. For them, the journey back to the source is healing to the soul. Female characters, as stated earlier, incarnate Mother Nature, tradition, and ancestral tribal life. In this view of things, and bearing in mind the colonial/neo-colonial context of the selected African corpus, it is logical to see that our African authors depict their key female characters as prostitutes. The relation between the two situations is coloniser-colonised based, and prostitution simply refers to submissiveness to intruding powers which are perverse. The Mother Nature metaphor is all the more important when we compare it with the new mother embodied by the metropolis. There is here a virtuous mother and a vicious mother: one has little to offer (because of its symbolic death) to its starving children, the other has a lot to offer to her foster children, at the cost of their soul.

The Countryside, with its plainness and sterility, has turned into the "Ragged Edge of the Universe" (to quote Nick Carraway, in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*). It is nothing more than an agonising province, fled by its own inhabitants, and waiting for God's providence to manifest itself (in the case of *Petals of Blood*, the peasants wait for rains). The province is thus part of a forgotten past, a disappearing pastoral.

There are two ways of looking at the small town in fiction, in the American context, according to Vernon Louis Parrington: the romantic and the realistic. In his *Main Currents in American Thought* vol.3, Parrington lists down the features of both

views of the small town in fiction. His explanation of the romantic small town in literature reminds us of such works as the pastoral odes of Virgil's *Bucolics* and *Georgics*, John Clare's *The Rural Muse* (1835), and Philip Roth's *American Pastoral*:

> It is a hold-over from an earlier period. (…) According to this theory the middle-western village is: (1) A land of economic well-being, uncursed by poverty and unspoiled by wealth; (2) A land of "folksiness"--the village a great family in its neighborliness, friendliness, sympathy; (3) Primarily middle-class, and therefore characteristically American, wholesome, and human in spite of its prosaic shortcomings; (4) The home of American democracy, dominated by the spirit of equality, where men are measured by their native qualities.[2]

The romantic small town in fiction is thus too idealistic to be true, especially bearing in mind the nineteenth-century context of massive industrialisation and westward expansion. This romantic view goes along with the set of myths associated with the pastoral.

Elise Marienstras's *Les Mythes fondateurs de la nation américaine* explains very well the symbolic terrain as a complex web which has evolved –ever since the Founding Fathers set foot on the 'New' continent– into a series of myths and on which the existence of the American nation was constructed. It also describes those myths that are an integral part of the very identity of the nation. The Pastoral, a "pillar" myth in the latter, is of particular interest here due to its relevance to the countryside-city

[2] Vernon Louis Parrington. *Main Currents in American Thought, An Interpretation of American Literature from the Beginnings to 1920 vol.3, The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America (1860-1920).* Norman & London: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1987 (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1930). 'Addenda'. <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/Parrington/vol3/Addenda_1917-1924.html>

opposition. Northrop Frye thoroughly explains the origin of such myths. In *Biblical and Classical Myths*, the author devotes a whole chapter to 'pastoral and agrarian images' and suggests that to understand the use of myths in ancient and contemporary Western literature, a study of the source (classical and Judeo- Christian) is essential. Just like Leo Marx, Marienstras (she actually quotes him) explains that there is 'continuity of the pastoral image in the vision that Americans have of their continent.'[3]

By contrast, the realistic small town, as depicted in new Naturalism, is devoid of such petty bourgeois hypocrisy and land idealisation through absurd hymns:

> It is the work of the younger intellectuals, more disciplined than the muckrakers, with wider culture and severer standards. They were concerned for civilization, the things of the spirit, a free creative individualism, rather than political liberalism. They led a searching criticism of the triumphant middle class, its ideals and its habitat, the town and city; the repressive tyrannies of its herd mind; the futility of its materialism.[4]

Parrington marks the difference here between naturalist muckrakers and new naturalist intellectuals whose approach to the treatment of the small town diverged according to their own beliefs. He adds that the latter benefited from the support of other writers who reacted against:

> (1) The acquisitive ideal of a machine civilization. (2) "The great illusion of American civilization, the illusion of optimism"--the staple of middle-class

[3] See Elise Marientras, *Les Mythes fondateurs de la nation américaine. : Essai sur le Discours Idéologique de l'Indépendance (1763- 1800)*, (Paris: François Maspero, 1976.).
[4]Vernon Louis Parrington. *Main Currents in American Thought, An Interpretation of American Literature from the Beginnings to 1920 vol.3, The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America (1860-1920).* Norman & London: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1987 (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1930). 'Addenda'.
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/Parrington/vol3/Addenda_1917-1924.html>

> business morale. (3) The sentimentalism of "comfortable literature," that evades reality and weakens the intellectual fiber. (4) The inhibitions of a Puritanism that has lost its sanctions. (5) The White-Tarkington doctrine of the "beautiful people" and "folksy village."[5]

It is this specific depiction against which Sinclair Lewis reacted when writing *Main Street*. His novel starts with a sort of introduction, informing the readers about the region of Gopher Prairie, a small uninteresting village inhabited by a host of folks from different social strata and different races. His introduction reminds us of Hamlin Garland's *Main Travelled Roads* (1891):

> This is America--a town of a few thousand, in a region of wheat and corn and dairies and little groves. The town is, in our tale, called "Gopher Prairie, Minnesota." But its Main Street is the continuation of Main Streets everywhere. The story would be the same in Ohio or Montana, in Kansas or Kentucky or Illinois, and not very differently would it be told Up York State or in the Carolina hills.[6]

Just like Garland in his collection of short stories, Lewis declares here that this village story could be the story of any place in the American Midwest. Both writers actually reacted against the 'romantic small town in fiction' as it did not fit the transforming West under capitalist principles. Right after presenting the novel's setting as an agrarian and farm region, Lewis gives aspects of its civilised face:

[5]Vernon Louis Parrington. *Op.cit.*
[6]Sinclair Lewis, *Main Street*. chapter 1, p.3

> Main Street is the climax of civilization. That this Ford car might stand in front of the Bon Ton Store, Hannibal invaded Rome and Erasmus wrote in Oxford cloisters. What Ole Jenson the grocer says to Ezra Stowbody the banker is the new law for London, Prague, and the unprofitable isles of the sea; whatsoever Ezra does not know and sanction, that thing is heresy, worthless for knowing and wicked to consider.
> Our railway station is the final aspiration of architecture. Sam Clark's annual hardware turnover is the envy of the four counties which constitute God's Country. In the sensitive art of the Rosebud Movie Palace there is a Message, and humor strictly moral.
> Such is our comfortable tradition and sure faith. Would he not betray himself an alien cynic who should otherwise portray Main Street, or distress the citizens by speculating whether there may not be other faiths?[7]

The author adds two elements of 'civilisation' which corrupted the Midwest, namely the car and the railway. However, they are not seen as the province's enemy but rather as a source of pride and fascination for its inhabitants. The fast-changing landscape in the opening paragraph of the novel reveals that the urbanisation process had reached the farthest agrarian sport and had put forward the city as the new owner of the pastoral:

> (…) by the Mississippi where Chippewas camped two generations ago, a girl stood in relief against the cornflower blue of Northern sky. She saw no Indians now; she saw flour-mills and the blinking windows of skyscrapers in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Nor was she thinking of squaws and portages, and the Yankee fur-traders whose shadows were all about her. She was meditating upon walnut fudge, the plays of Brieux, the reasons why heels run over, and the fact that the

[7]Sinclair Lewis. *Op.cit.*

> chemistry instructor had stared at the new coiffure which concealed her ears.[8]

The opening paragraphs of the opening chapters in each of Dreiser's *SC* and *The Financier* give the same, if not a further, image of the city's advent over prairie fields, revealing thus the imminent disappearance of the green past:

> The Philadelphia into which Frank Algernon Cowperwood was born was a city of two hundred and fifty thousand and more. It was set with handsome parks, notable buildings, and crowded with historic memories. Many of the things that we and he knew later were not then in existence — the telegraph, telephone, express company, ocean steamer, city delivery of mails. There were no postage-stamps or registered letters. The street car had not arrived. In its place were hosts of omnibuses, and for longer travel the slowly developing railroad system still largely connected by canals.[9]

Again, Dreiser lists here the elements of 'civilisation' that bloomed in the frontier West. The beginning of *SC* is no different when the author features Carrie boarding the afternoon train, bidding her parents goodbye as the machine heads to Chicago:

> It was in August, 1889. She was eighteen years of age, bright, timid and full of the illusions of ignorance and youth. Whatever touch of regret at parting characterized her thoughts it was certainly not for advantages now being given up. A gush of tears at her mother's farewell kiss, a touch in the throat when the cars clacked by the flour mill where her father worked by the day, a pathetic sigh as the familiar green environs of the village passed in review, and the

[8]Sinclair Lewis. *Op.cit.*
[9]Theodore Dreiser, *The Financier* (1912), Chapter 1.

> threads which bound her so lightly to girlhood and home were irretrievably broken.[10]

Carrie is instantaneously cut from village life and family life by the machine taking her to the city. This symbolises the speed at which the Prairie lands had changed and introduce the new face of the frontier which, at the time of its very symbolic virtual closure, had already been dramatically urbanised.

If Dreiser's Carrie goes to the city for good, fleeing thus the dullness of her Columbia City, Lewis's Carol is compelled to stay at Gopher Prairie and bear its stifling routine life. The conversation she has with Guy Pollock reveals to the reader the syndrome of the 'Village Virus', which is 'more dangerous than the cancer'[11] whereby country people leave their province only to find themselves coming back to it despite its deterioration:

> The Village Virus is the germ (…) it's extraordinarily like the hook-worm. it infects ambitious people who stay too long in the provinces. You'll find it epidemic among lawyers and doctors and ministers and college bred merchants all these people who have had a glimpse of the world that thinks and laughs, but have returned to their swamp.[12]

Carol, herself, embodies this syndrome since, despite the fact that all her cultural and social projects to reform country life at Gopher fail, she returns to the small village after her two-year stay at Washington. The words of Pollock sound even truer in her case because upon her return, nothing had changed, not even her husband. The village

---

[10]Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900), Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981, Chapter 1, pp.3-4
[11]Sinclair Lewis, *Main Street*. chapter 13, p.169
[12]Sinclair Lewis. *Ibid*. p.170

is stifling her; it goes against her desires of reforming the countryside and against her independent non-conformist self. Actually, Carol feels all the boredom of village life as soon as she settles there, after she has a thirty-minute walk around the place.

Similar to Carrie's and Carol's feeling of boredom in the village is Ngugi's Mumbi, in *A Grain of Wheat*, who feels suffocation in her native village and aspires to dreams of heroism, of extraordinary things that would change her life:

> Mumbi often went to the station on Sundays. The rattling train always thrilled her. At times she longed to be the train itself. Her dark eyes had a dreamy look that longed for something the village could not give. She lay in the sun and ardently yearned for a life in which love and heroism, suffering, and martyrdom were possible.[13]

The village is a dream killer and Mumbi's ennui and feeling of boredom in the village is akin to Carrie's, Carol's, Wanja's, and Jagua's. The difference with the latter is that she has recourse to the healing, regenerating and rejuvenating power of village life (Ogabu), which can be contrasted to the stifling, paralysing and killing power of the traditional village life in Obi's Iguedo, Umuofia (*NLE*). In the middle and late chapters of *JN*, Ekwensi devotes long passages praising the virtues and the beauties of village life and landscape.

While the degradation of the pastoral in America is related to the American's westward movement, fostered by the machine, Country deterioration in the African corpus is associated with the white man's intrusion into the woods using the same machine:

---

[13] Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *A Grain of Wheat*, New York: Penguin, 2002, PDF,'Introduction' Abdulrazak Gurnah chapter 7, p.82

> Soon people saw the whiteman had imperceptibly acquired more land to meet the growing needs of his position. He had already pulled down the grass-thatched hut and erected a more permanent building. Elders of the land protested. They looked beyond the laughing face of the whiteman and suddenly saw a long line of other red strangers who carried, not the Bible, but the sword.[14]

The whiteman took African lands by force to build the whole railway network that would facilitate the exploitation of the continent:

> ‘This land used to yield. Rains used not to fail. What happened?’ inquired Ruoro. It was Muturi who answered. ‘You forget that in those days the land was not for buying. It was for use. It was also plenty, you need not have beaten one yard over and over again. The land was also covered with forests. The trees called rain. They also cast a shadow on the land. But the forest was eaten by the railway. You remember they used to come for wood as far as here – to feed the iron thing. Aah, they only knew how to eat, how to take away everything. But then, those were Foreigners –white people.’[15]

In *Petals of Blood*, the picture is more desolate as the author links the loss of agricultural lands with neocolonial passivity and complicity. The miserable state of Ilmorog turns to a modernised New Ilmorog, where peasants are quite alienated. It would be fairly interesting to relate this point to Paton’s *CBC*, and Zola’s *La Terre*, in order to examine the devaluation and exploitation of both the peasant and the native lands, through a Naturalist lens. It would be equally pertinent to draw a comparison between Paton’s *CBC* and Zola’s *Germinal* so as to examine the very significant

[14] Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *A Grain of Wheat*, chapter 2, p.29
[15] Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Petals of Blood*, chapter 5, p.97

parallel between the world of the poor and the rich, as well as the world of the native Africans and the white settlers in the countryside. Indeed, the sharp contrast between these worlds is visible not only in the city, but also, and most importantly, in the rural areas.

In the first chapter of *Germinal* (Part One), Zola devotes the opening pages and the closing pages to the description of the setting of the story, that is, the countryside where the coal mines are located. The plains are desert-like, the hills are arid in the middle of March, and the weather is very cold. The first and the last paragraphs of the chapter display quite a somber image of the countryside in springtime, a period of regeneration. The gloom of the weather and the atmosphere, combined with the sterility of the valleys, suggest the misery in which the poor of the rural regions live and the harsh conditions in which they work. By contrast, the rich provincials' houses are built where Nature is in bloom. Likewise, Paton's first chapter in *CBC* (Book One) opens with the description of the desolate country region of Natal. The first page contains a sad portrait of the latter. The hills are dry; the lands, which are sterile and arid, have taken a dark red colour reminding of blood, heat is unbearable; and there is dust everywhere. This arid rural area is the place where the native Africans live. Contrarily, the blooming regions of Natal are reserved for the white settlers. If Ngugi's *PB* (1977) deals extensively with the desolation of the farm lands and their drastic transformation due to the European intrusion, his earlier novel *Weep not, Child* (1964) also tackles the issue of separation between the native Africans and the white settlers in the countryside. Indeed, the representation of the latter differs as the land of the

Africans and those of the colonizers are depicted in the same way Paton's *CBC* and Zola's *Germinal* do.

Actually, this contrast between the rich and the poor, the native Africans and the white settlers, the coloniser and the colonised, the provincials and the city dwellers is an epitome of the larger dichotomy of the country and the city. These worlds are parallel to each other and they never seem to meet. Zola's Rougon-Macquart novelistic cycle is pioneering when it comes to dealing with this dichotomy, in the whole body of Naturalistic fiction. This confirms the fact that our authors have been under the influence of the French writer. In fact, what makes the division between the worlds aforementioned more obvious is the railway. The train reinforces the gap between the rural environment and the urban environment in such a way as to make both turn out to be hostile places for the modern man. A close examination of the ways in which the railway and the train are dealt with in the novels under study is, therefore, necessary.

B-The "Machine in the Garden": A Tempting Snake or a "Celestial Railroad"?

Among the most complex elements that must be dealt with in relation to the pastoral is the train, or the machine. As stated earlier on, a study of the train implies also a study of the railway system and the impact its introduction into the countryside and later establishment and development had on the rural environment of both

America and Africa, though it is worth mentioning that almost a century separates both processes in the two continents.

Most of the novels under study include significant passages dealing with the train and the railway as a whole. Perhaps the novels where little –if at all– space is devoted to the machine are novels concentrating on other means/systems of transportation, such as motorways and highways. The latter novels are found in the African corpus under study.

There were three broad views of the train and the railway system at the time of its proliferation in rural areas: a progressive view, a pessimistic/realistic view, and an idealistic/romantic view. Given the fact that the present research work deals with realistic and naturalistic fiction –the aim of which is mainly to depict reality as it is– the third view is not our focus since the novels under study do not praise the machine and present its 'virtues'; they rather stress the drastic environmental and social changes, degradation, and destruction with which it is associated.

As stated earlier on (in chapter one, section three), the progressive view implies an optimistic attitude towards the train/railway as regards their future and their role in the building of the national economy and the opportunities they offer. This positive reaction also includes feelings such as nostalgia for the past (when the train was first introduced into rural areas and pastoral lands, promising thus the flowering of the agrarian regions).[16]

The pessimistic view, on the other hand, stresses the evil aspect of the train. Naturalistic par excellence, such consideration of this means of transportation points at

[16] Examples of such feelings can be found in *The Railway Game* (by Clifford Dyment), as mentioned in Chapter 01 Section C, and *Memories of Industrial Britain, Foundries and Rolling Mills* (Fred Dibnah & David Hall).

the latter's drawbacks, its negative consequences and its destructive quality.[17] In literature, Dickens's novels abound in passages where the train bears an evil connotation. Zola's representation of the railway/train is not less pejorative, especially in his *La Bête humaine* (translated into *The Human Beast* or *The Beast Within*).

In Zola's *The Human Beast* (*La Bête humaine*) and *Germinal*, one may notice that the image of the train as a 'black serpent' (both literally and figuratively) is predominant, which is a naturalistic representation *par excellence*. This representation directs the reader to the biblical image of Satan (in the *Old Testament*'s opening book, *Genesis*), embodied by the tempting snake. The train is, therefore, both the object of temptation –a fascinating discovery that heals the feeling of ill-being in the countryside, especially, at the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th Century– and the means by which this temptation to leave the dull provincial life for a new urbanised world (the metropolis, with its impossible yet attainable dreams and its realisable materialistic desires) is fulfilled.

In the American context, and now that the Garden of Eden (wilderness or the Frontier) is lost, the countryside stands out as the only environment that has somewhat kept a certain purity, certain human values and a sense of morality. The intrusion of the train in this pastoral decor, however, changes everything. People aspire to new horizons, a future of materialistic well-being, an urban dream made concrete by the sole presence of the locomotive. With its halo, the latter acquires a divine motive to

[17] Examples of criticism going against technological progress include Martin J. Wiener's *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980.*

help achieve the Americans' Manifest Destiny westward, as well as a legitimate economic justification for its railway system to be firmly established.

The locomotive (or the machine) stands for masculinity, daring and courage as it penetrates the landscape; it is not surprising to find in it parallels with the idea of abuse or, in environmental ecocritical terms, territorial rape. If the locomotive symbolises the move forward, the progress towards the promising future, the train's last wagon or car stands for an escape, a regret towards the past, a distancing from the past –in this case the pastoral past– irretrievably left behind. It allows a better view of the past and rather blurs one's vision of both the present and the future. Nevertheless, it may also incarnate the will to bury what is behind, the safe feeling that the past is dead and the future is just born. Even though the train (the locomotive) was the product of the industrial revolution in Europe, it had been readily integrated in the American landscape. This happened despite the controversy that this technological advent provoked during a period of identity affirmation (around the second half of the 19th Century). This was the period when the West (and all the myths born during the westward expansion, which, in their turn, reinforced the movement or served as motives in favour of its cause) was the object of all the fantasies that the nation –now definitely freed from British dominion, at least politically and socially– could afford and wanted to realise.

The train thus was paid full attention, with its attractiveness and promises. Its representation in literature and painting was romanticised and idealised. It was primarily seen as the tool that would help reach the ideal that so many people dreamt

about, the ‘middle state’, an intermediary harmonious state between the primitive (wilderness, or raw nature) and the refined or fashioned (the countryside, the pastoral, the Garden of Eden, the town, and later the city). Nevertheless, with the completion, in 1867, of the transcontinental railway, which crosses America from the eastern coast to the western coast, this so long sought-after balance was destabilised and the process of ‘modernisation’ was more rapid than imagined. Things became thus uncontrollable for man, especially with the introduction of certain aspects of a fast-growing capitalism imported from Europe: liberal commerce, mass industrialisation, the development of transportation means, consumerism, big scale urbanisation. It is obvious that the train symbolism would change with the change in the context and the realities of the time. If some fervent defenders of technology rationalised, adopted and sang hymns to the incorporation of the locomotive in the process of the identity formation/affirmation of the nation (now well-expanded), there was also a feeling of nostalgia for America’s Lost Paradise. It was connected to a denunciation of the violation of the sacred myth of the Frontier by the very tools that caused great damages to the forests and precipitated the urbanisation of the continent, that is the axe and the train.

Richard Slotkin, in *The Fatal Environm*ent, explains the history of the locomotive and its role both in the Frontier myth formation and its deconstruction. Leo Marx explains, in his *Machine in the Garden*, the importance the train occupied in the American scenery of the 19th Century and in the minds of the Americans. People at the time viewed it as symbol of progress. There would be no future for America without this object of wonder embodying a constant fast forward movement. “To the citizen of

a democracy inventions are vehicles for the pursuit of happiness.”[18] Marx adds a little further the sacred connotation that had been attributed to the machine in a time when materialistic and imperialistic ambitions were justified by religious concepts and spiritual drives:

> The result is that Americans have seized upon the machine as their birthright. Granted that the best of the fine arts — statuary, painting, and architecture — is still to be found in the Old World, "there is one agent which we can call peculiarly our own, and in the application of which, the nation is destined to excel." What is more, the agent has appeared at a providential moment, just when our manifest destiny requires it.[19]

Here, Marx shows the incorporation of the locomotive in the ideology behind the formation of the American identity by the progressives, those who legitimate its existence, development and utility (or practicality) by using biblical concepts such as the nation’s Manifest Destiny, God’s elect, and the providential expansionist mission or the divine mission that evolved over time in the ‘civilising mission’.

In the African context, the civilising mission in America which aimed at exploiting the Native Indians’ lands was replicated to ‘enlighten’ the Native Africans in the name of Christ and knowledge. The train was to help accomplish this mission in a stunningly rapid way. It is thus important to stress the fact that this revolutionary means of transportation was the major cause of the establishment of capitalism as an exploiting

---

[18] Leo Marx. *The Machine in the Garden, Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2000 (1964). pp.204-5.
[19]Leo Marx. *Ibid*. p.205

system both in American and in African interiors. It also helped the railway corporations proliferate and settle in rural areas, transforming them in a record-time to urbanised areas. While the introduction of the train / railway in the American landscape engendered different reactions on the part of countrymen (curiosity, fascination, reluctance, caution), its importation to and establishment in African lands was rather met with great distrust.

Contrary to the American context, the Native Africans had to be twice as careful since, not only did they have to face human intruders but they also had to cope with the latter's 'metallic tools of invasion.' Resistance to the development and expansion of the railway system was harsh in the New Continent, but it was even stiffer in colonised Africa. *Little House* (Laura Ingalls Wilder's novel and its TV series adaptation featuring Michael Landon) and *Hell on Wheels* (the Western modern TV series) are good examples of the American Midwesterners and Westerners opposing the European-imported project. These countrymen, objecting to the foreseen loss of the Western American frontier, the destruction of the Prairie lands and the injustices such a system was inflicting on the rural economy, expressed their anger overtly even though they knew they would lose this fierce battle led by a pitiless economic greed. Ironically, the legitimate owners of the lands, who happen to be the continent's original dwellers (the Indian-Americans), were deprived of their basic right to a shelter by those complaining about losing properties they called theirs. The Native Africans were not more fortunate than the Amerindians; they had to suffer the colonising process under all its aspects: cultural, social, economic and political. The railway web would allow the advent of industrial progress in the most remote rural areas. The

arrival of the train was seen thus as a threat to their very existence for their life was traditionally village-based.

If we take the example of Dreiser's *SC*, we notice that the author pictures his heroine's departure from the province to the metropolis, on the first page of his novel's first chapter. She boards the train bound for Chicago, bids goodbye –which is actually a farewell– to her parents, and the train does the rest: it cuts her off from her family and provincial ties for good.

The train ride Carrie takes stands for the passage of America from an agrarian pastoral state to an industrial state. Again, the transition from pastoral to industrial America can only take place via the train and the whole railway system, rushing to fulfil America's capitalist needs and greed:

> Carrie Meeber's train ride from her rural Columbia City to the furiously expanding Chicago of 1889 in the opening pages of Sister Carrie echoes the American passage from an agrarian to an industrial temper. Where the past, dominated by the fact of the wilderness, had been largely distinguished by an expansion into the unsettled regions of the West, the future was rising in the industrial concentrations of the city. Hence when Dreiser waxes rhapsodic about the pull of the metropolis –its lights, theatres, glittering restaurants, its infectious and perpetual energies– he is lyricizing, however unwittingly, a fact of economic history. And when Carrie, having lost her first job in Chicago, refuses to return to Columbia City despite her sense of exile, she is expressing an almost sensory response to the shifting claims in American life. The movement from the village into the multitudinous isolation of the city was as irreversible as time.

> Within this field of force, not only the nation but its deepest conscience was being reshaped. The result was an industrialization of morality.[20]

Besides the importance of the train and the railway system in the history of both America and Africa, it is highly important to lead an iconological study of the machine and analyse the set of imagery and symbolism related to it. Indeed, just like the pastoral and the city, the train and the railway appear as a multi-dimensional entity.

As to the railway imagery, the train is depicted in the novels under study as an object. Yet, it is not any object; it is an object of desire that people would crave to possess. The train is also personified and humanised. It is painted in the guise of a seducing woman, using her charms to deceive its passengers and the people whose lands are taken to serve its track. Furthermore, and this is typical of naturalistic fiction, animal imagery is used in relation to the train and the railway system; the machine is to be considered as an animal or a beast: an iron horse, an iron snake, and an octopus.

The Machine, as featured in the naturalistic fiction selected here, stands for an evil or a negative force. It is an insensitive killing machine, a monster, a violent criminal, a murderer thirsty for human blood and flesh, reminding us much of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, in which man suffers from his own transformed inventions. It bears also a biblical connotation. It is depicted as devilish or satanic. It is the tempting snake in *Genesis* faking the idealistic 'Celestial Railroad'[21], which takes modern times provincials and pure/innocent/pious people on their country-city pilgrimage to their social ascension and, very often, to the loss of their soul.

---

[20]Arthur Edelstein, "Introduction", in Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*. New York: Harper & Row, 1965 (Doubleday, 1900). (pp.xv-xix). p.xv.

[21]Reference is made here to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) and Nathaniel Hawthorne's short satirical allegory of it, entitled 'The Celestial Railroad' (1843).

Furthermore, the train takes an image that is prevalent both in the African and the American novels of the corpus. It is described as a setting for social and class division, as well as racial segregation. This image applies to division between the European settlers and the native Africans on the one hand, and between provincials and city dwellers, on the other hand. It had very often been depicted in nineteenth-century fiction as a place epitomising society at large in the sense that one could see, from a simple train ride, the social strata of their community and understand their living conditions.

Last but not least, the image of the territorial/provincial/pastoral lands' rape is recurrent in both American and African literatures. It reinforces the idea that virgin lands are lost for good and that, instead, the big metropolis becomes the new hostess for wanderers.

The study of such an icon would, however, be incomplete if the symbolism associated to it is omitted. An iconological study of the train and the railway system would, therefore, be necessary to fully grasp the authors' views of it and intention behind depicting it in their novels. The literary iconography of the machine includes a set of repeated symbols that strike the reader's attention. This transportation means, capitalist in essence *par excellence*, refers to distance, both temporal and spatial. It is also synonymous with travel and experience. It facilitates escape for a dreamed of better future. The train also engenders feelings such as nostalgia and melancholy.

On a deeper level of understanding the train/railway symbolism lie many key ideas prevailing in realistic and naturalistic fiction, including the one dealt with here. The train is seen as a symbol of exploitation and corruption. It is a tool serving Western imperialistic greed. The machine is the agent of capitalism, the Janus-faced weapon at the origin of the irretrievable destruction of the countryside and the pastoral. It incarnates the outer struggle between good and evil, and the inner struggle within Man to understand himself, fight against his impulses, and rescue his soul from the innate evil drive. The typological and psychological allegory referred to by the journey on the train as life-changing and transforming is revealed by the authors as the outer journey and the inner journey of the characters. It stands for change in the sense that it allows one to go on a metanoia –journey to change oneself for the better– although, as we shall see, this is not applicable for all the characters of the selected novels and is true only for a few.

To start with, in terms of temporal distance, the train/railway stands for the past and the future. The notion of time elapsing is very frequently used in literature to refer not only to the speed with which the machine moves but also to the fact that the now-moment is abridged to the extent that it slips from the hands of the traveller. The train's last wagon (or the car back) and the locomotive/machine (the first wagon or front car, the engine) strikingly symbolise the two aspects of time at once: the former represents the past while the latter represents the future. The feeling one has in the last carriage/wagon of the train is that it gives the impression to have a full grasp of the past but also to leave it speedily behind, without having the time to understand or appreciate the present moment. As to the future, one does not know what it holds since

one is heading speedily to it. What the rapid movement forward of the train suggests is that it takes the individual ahead yet it does not give them the necessary *time* to handle time itself.[22]

With the rapid advent of the train, the present moment is not felt, not sensed, it fleets and escapes the traveller, it is ungraspable. One may see what is ahead and what is left behind but not what is at the present moment. The now-moment does not exist. The linear movement of the train refers to progress, a constant move towards the unseen, while the circular movement of the train refers to the ebb and flow of the individual's life (the eternal come and go, to and fro); it is a repeated movement of departure-arrival-departure, an endless movement ahead.

The conflicting moments of past and future, confusing train passengers and blurring their actual vision, are time elements that have been used in detective fiction due to their parallel with the mystery of crime solving, in which time elapsing is crucial, as pointed out by Laura Marcus:

> (…) Mark Seltzer in his recent work on serial killing, with reference to the nexus of 'body' and 'machine' in Naturalist fiction, has described as a 'logic of equivalence'.
> The logic of equivalence (journey/book, body/machine) exists, however, in relation to, and in tension with, the logic of belatedness, the 'missing' of points in space and time on which Benjamin also insists. In his account, the logic of equivalence, of synchronicity and simultaneity, serves to suppress or mask the anxiety of 'everything missed'. Yet the logic of equivalence can also be the logic of violence and of murderous repetition. If, as Seltzer suggests, the logic

[22]The notion 'past and future' is mentioned in a railway review of the same title. See'Bulletins — Past and Future.' *The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society* Bulletin, No. 53 (October, 1940), pp.6-7. Published by: *Railway & Locomotive Historical Society (R&LHS)*
Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43519899>. Accessed: 02-04-2020 00:15 UTC

> of equivalence is the driving force behind the Naturalist novel of the end of the nineteenth century, the logic of belatedness may be more characteristic of modernism, with, in Thomas Hardy's phrase, its 'ache', its awareness of things 'passing', and in Freudian terms its dynamics of deferral and *Nachtraglichkeit.* The railroad, as Wolfgang Schivelbusch suggests in his brilliant study *The Railway Journey,* 'knows only points of departure and destination.'5 The spatial dimensions of the present are thus effaced: there is only the past and the future.[23]

A little further, Marcus adds the important element in time handling on the train: the windowpane. The latter, which offers a blurred vision of the present moment, triggers the passenger's dreams and memories since they cannot live the present, nor can they see the future, nor even less can they go back to the past –as Carrie innocently thought, on board the train, about the possibility of going back home if things do not go well for her in Chicago, which is only a few miles away from Columbia City. As the landscape slips away before her eyes, and the time separating her from the metropolis elapses, she recalls memories, however brief, of her father and her hometown. The speedy engine does not give her time to cry or handle the feelings she has at such memories so much that she soon forgets about them all.

> In his essay 'Railway Navigation and Incarceration', Michel de Certeau introduces a further element of the railway, the windowpane, and a logic we can add to the logics of equivalence and of belatedness, 'an imperative of separation,.6 The traveller is 'immobile inside the train, seeing immobile things slip by', less a reader than a character or 'type' (…).

[23]*Laura Marcus*. 15. 'Oedipus Express: Trains, Trauma and Detective Fiction.' (pp.201-21), in Warren Chernaik, Martin Swales, Robert Vilain (eds.), *The Art of Detective Fiction*. Basingstoke-Hampshire, UK & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000. p.203.

> De Certeau argues that 'it is the silence of these things put at a distance, behind the windowpane, which, from a great distance, makes our memories speak or draws out of the shadows the dreams of our secrets' (p. 112).[24]

By what is labelled ‘somatic culture’ in train studies is meant the train’s real or alleged effects on the passenger’s body. Anne Carol explains the confusion of senses engendered by train journeys. ‘Le voyage en train constitue, d’abord, une expérience sensible. Le voyageur emporté pour la première fois par la locomotive est assailli de sensations inédites, pour la plupart liées à la vitesse.’[25] She adds that the effects on sight are significant; they are not just blurry, they are illusory too, allowing the passenger to see unreal shapes and shadows:

> La plupart se concentrent sur les impressions optiques créées par la rapidité du déplacement. Le train anéantit la vision proche, aveuglant l’œil partiellement : un des premiers voyageurs s’étonne de ce «qu’il était impossible d’avoir le temps de distinguer, à trois pas sur le sable, un insecte de la grosseur d’une abeille, ou de reconnaître les traits d’un ami». Mais cette vitesse enfante aussi des formes : par la succession rapide des horizons, elle trouble les repères visuels et crée une sensation de factice, voire de fantasmagorie, que les premiers voyageurs rapprochent plus ou moins explicitement des « effets » et des illusions de la scène (…).[26]

[24] *Laura Marcus*. *Op.cit.* p.204.
[25] Anne Carol. *L’expérience ferroviaire : Culture somatique et voyages en train au XIXe siècle* In : *Histoire par corps : Chair, posture, charisme* [en ligne]. Aix-en-Provence : Presses universitaires de Provence, 2012 (accessed, 18 February 2023). <http://books.openedition.org/pup/33870>.(p. 77-107).
[26] *Idem.*

Such effects are not overtly stated in *SC*, yet one may think that Carrie's thoughts are in such a rush that she prefers to look elsewhere than out of the windowpane. Dreiser's description of Carrie's hometown is very short and is immediately followed by the description of Chicago, the big city. The train moves at the speed of Carrie's thoughts and accelerates them further. The novel comprises train episodes involving Carrie as a constantly moving character. The train always takes her to higher levels, to upper statuses, to bigger places. It carries her, thus, from Columbia City –Wisconsin– to Chicago, to Detroit, to Montreal –Canada–, to New York, where she sits at last on the throne of fame. Her move from her native rural scene to new urban scenes is made faster through the train, which does not allow time for reflection. For Carrie, it is also a means of escape towards freedom, constantly breaking with the past, and always progressing.

Nevertheless, while the train takes Carrie to fame, to her ascension, it carries Hurstwood to his very descent and degradation as he moves from Chicago to New York, following an illusion embodied by Carrie, who stands for his dream of youth. In the first chapter, the train distances Carrie from her past provincial life in Columbia City, in the Midwest (Wisconsin). In chapters 28 and 29, the train distances Carrie from her past in Chicago for good. 'The wheels of progress' only take her to higher positions –according to her own material aspirations and vision of what happiness feels like.

Carrie's train reveries remind us of Willa Cather's Lucy Gayheart, a country girl who leaves her little province to 'conquer' Chicago. Aged eighteen, just like Carrie, she goes to the city on the train. Her will is to study music in the big city. Yet,

her story ends tragically as she gets involved in a romance with the famous musician Clement Sebastian. At the beginning of the novel, she was among the crowd leaving their home towns in a hurry. 'The station platform was soon full of restless young people, glancing up the track, looking at their watches, as if they could not endure their own town a moment longer.'[27] She, too, was impatient to leave for the metropolis. A while later, on board the train bound for Chicago, she could abandon herself to her dreams of the city:

> (…) At last she was alone, lying still in the dark, and could give herself up to the vibration of the train, - a rhythm that had to do with escape, change, chance, with life hurrying forward. That sense of release and surrender went all over her body; she seemed to lie in it as in a warm bath. (…) In a few hours one could cover that incalculable distance; from the winter country and homely neighbours, to the city where the air trembled like a tuning-fork with unimaginable possibilities.[28]

Ironically, her dreams will turn to a tragedy by the end of the novel. Willa Cather, labelled as the novelist of the Prairie, recalls the early days of the train/ railway in the Midwest and feels nostalgic for the machine, which went up green hills, promising then the establishment of a Garden of Eden.[29]

The train for the romantics and the realists/naturalists does not have the same signification. It doesn't not stand for the same thing for the pessimistic Naturalists and the romantic/idealistic Naturalists either. Leo Marx, a nostalgic for the early days of the locomotive but not for the interpretation that his fellow Americans gave it,

---

[27]Willa Cather. *Lucy Gayheart* (1935, Alfred A. Knopf), Gutenberg Project (PDF). Book 01- III. p.1.
[28] Willa Cather. *Ibid.* p.20.
[29]Willa Cather's books of the railway and train include *A Lost Lady*, *Tales of Town and Country*, *The Professor's House* and the Prairie trilogy *–O Pioneers!*, *The Song of the Lark*, and *My Antonia*.

describes the fascination that the introduction of the machine generated in people at the time and the great interest artists took in it:

> Of all the great modern innovations, the railroad probably is the one to which American artists have accorded the largest significance. The passenger railroad first appeared on the American scene in the 1830s, and it almost immediately caught the eye of several of the nation's most gifted landscape painters. (…) The subject attracted their attention, for one thing, because of its newness — its radically innovative character-and, for another, because of its compelling visual properties. A steam-powered locomotive moving across the landscape is an arresting sight -so arresting, indeed, that its visual character alone might seem to account for the strong hold it so quickly took on the imagination of artists.[30]

The 'railroad-in-the-American-landscape' image has long contributed to the Americans' tendency to romanticise the marvellous invention that could bind regions in the blink of an eye. In *The Machine in the Garden*, Marx draws a sharp contrast between the romantic symbolism around the train and its bitter reality that the Americans chose to ignore:

> The result is that Americans have seized upon the machine as their birthright. (…) What is more, the agent has appeared at a providential moment, just when our manifest destiny requires it.
> (…)
> The new power, this benefactor of man, is not to be selfishly guarded as an American possession. (The

[30]Leo Marx, 'The Railroad-in-the-Landscape: An Iconological Reading of a Theme in American Art', in <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=5665704>

> European origins of industrial technology often are neglected).[31]

Besides their appropriation of a European invention, which they associate to divine providence, Americans also appropriated western lands, originally inhabited by Native Indians, in the name of democracy:

> By now the image of the American machine has become a transcendent symbol: a physical object invested with political and metaphysical ideality. It rolls across Europe and Asia, liberating the oppressed people of the Old World — a signal, in fact, for the salvation of mankind. (…) Above all, the rhetoric conveys that sense of unlimited possibility which seizes the American imagination at this remarkable juncture. (…) Consider how the spectacle of the machine in a virgin land must have struck the mind. Like nothing ever seen under the sun, it appears when needed most: when the great west finally is open to massive settlement, when democracy is triumphant and gold is discovered in California, here — as if by design — comes a new power commensurate with the golden opportunity of all history. (…)[32]

Leo Marx brings the two passages above to a sharp contrast with the whole rhetoric behind the interpretation of the railway/train presence and its lack of consistency:

> (…) But this is not to deny the intellectual hollowness of the rhetoric. The stock response to the panorama of progress, as Mill observed, by-passes ideas; it is essentially a buoyant feeling generated without words or thought. The same may be said of the rhetoric. It rises like froth on a tide of exuberant self-regard,

[31]Leo Marx. *The Machine in the Garden, Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2000 (1964). p.205
[32]Leo Marx. *Ibid*. p.206

> sweeping over all misgivings, problems, and contradictions.[33]

The symbol of the train and railway as a means of exploitation is present in the novels under study. Along with this idea, there is the significant idea of the train as a violent beast, a monster, a criminal, an insensitive machine crashing upon the individual. Such imagery and symbolism derives from Zola's key works –in the Rougon-Macquart's cycle– dealing with the issue of exploitation. His prominent works treating the latter theme are known to have influenced writers from different countries, including Frank Norris. 'As Lars Ahnebrink points out, Norris was especially indebted to three of Zola's novels in *The Octopus*: *Germinal*, the story of miners' strike; *La Bête humaine*, a railroad novel; and *La Terre*, a novel of rural Life.'[34] The monstrosity of the machine is associated with the dismembering of the green landscape and the fatal impact its introduction and establishment had on the individual's and the community's life.

Charles Dickens, the novelist of the city of London *par excellence*, portrayed the train as an evil machine, ruining the English country landscape and people's lives, in *Dombey and Son* (1848). For him, it is a pitiless monster and a murderer too. In a part entitled 'The New Railway', he depicts railways swallowing the Pastoral lands and country regions (eating up people, their homes, and their natural environment, such as gardens), and fostering a rapid urbanisation process:

---

[33] Leo Marx. *Op.cit*. p.207
[34] Kevin Starr, 'Introduction', in Frank Norris, *The Octopus, A Story of California*, New York: Penguin, 1986 (1901) (pp.vii-xxxi) p.xviii.

Everywhere were bridges that led nowhere; thoroughfares that were wholly impassable; Babel towers of chimneys, wanting half their height; temporary wooden houses and enclosures, in the most unlikely situations; carcases of ragged tenements, and fragments of unfinished walls and arches, and piles of scaffolding, and wildernesses of bricks, and giant forms of cranes, and tripods straddling above nothing. There were a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness, wildly mingled out of their places, upside down, burrowing in the earth, aspiring in the air, mouldering in the water, and unintelligible as any dream…

In short, the yet unfinished and unopened Railroad was in progress; and, from the very core of all this dire disorder, trailed smoothly away, upon its mighty course of civilisation and improvement.[35]

A little further, he describes the regions and the people who are 'vanquished' by the train's intrusion into the country lands, and who, eventually, give up their struggle against the machine. They decide to promote it instead of fighting it:

There was no such place as Staggs's Gardens. It had vanished from the earth. (…) Bridges that had led to nothing, led to villas, gardens, churches, healthy public walks. The carcasses of houses, and beginnings of new thoroughfares, had started off upon the line at steam's own speed, and shot away into the country in a monster train.

As to the neighbourhood which had hesitated to acknowledge the railroad in its straggling days, that had grown wise and penitent, as any Christian might in such a case, and now boasted of its powerful and prosperous relation. There were railway patterns in its drapers' shops, and railway journals in the windows of its newsmen. (…) There was even railway time observed in clocks, as if the sun itself had given in.
(…)

[35]Charles Dickens. *Dombey and Son*. London : Bradbury & Evans, 1848. Hazleton, PA : Pennsylvania State University, 2007 (for the digital version). 'Chapter 6: Paul's Second Deprivation'.p.74.

> To and from the heart of this great change, all day and night, throbbing currents rushed and returned incessantly like its life's blood. Crowds of people and mountains of goods, departing and arriving scores upon scores of times in every four-and-twenty hours, produced a fermentation in the place that was always in action. The very houses seemed disposed to pack up and take trips.[36]

Even if Dickens initiated this realistic view of the train as an intruder, sweeping things and people away from its track –and a devilish machine whose construction gave the English countryside an earthquake-like desolate panorama–, Zola's train works from the Rougon-Macquart cycle are known to have had the biggest number of admirers and imitators. His most noteworthy train work is undoubtedly *The Beast Within* (also translated from *La Bête humaine* -1890- as *The Human Beast*). In this novel, the machine is animalised into a ferocious and mighty beast, personified into a cold-blooded murderer, and compared to the Devil itself with its evil force. Its violence and insensitiveness are very minutely depicted in the entirety of the first chapter and the last chapter (chapter twelve). The latter chapter is of particular interest in relation to our study. The introductory paragraph features 'La Lison', the machine of the main character Jacques, as a domesticated animal or a docile woman with whom he had come to a peaceful agreement:

> Three months later, on a warm night in June, Jacques was driving the Le Havre express, which had left Paris at six thirty. His new locomotive, number 608, was fresh from the works. Jacques had been entrusted with running her in — with her 'initiation' as he put it. Although he was getting to know the locomotive,

[36]Charles Dickens. *Op.cit.* 'The New Railway', 'Chapter 15: Amazing Artfulness of Captain Cuttle, and a New Pursuit for Walter Gay'.pp.238 -9.

> she didn't handle easily; she was awkward and temperamental, like a young horse that has to be broken in before it will accept the harness. He swore at her frequently; he really missed *La Lison.* He had to watch her very carefully; he could hardly take his hand off the reversing wheel. That night, however, the sky was so beautifully calm that Jacques felt more able to relax and give the locomotive its head.[37]

The last two pages of the last chapter, however, sum up the essence of Zola's message as to the train and human nature in very powerful closing paragraphs. The extreme violence of the machine is so important that the two protagonists, who engage in a dangerous fight while the engine is moving, are projected under the flying wheels and are smashed to pieces:

> The train rushed on, thundering out of the tunnel and continuing its headlong progress through the dreary, deserted countryside. It swept through Malaunay like a whirlwind, so fast that the deputy station master, who was standing on the platform, did not see the two men grappling with each other as it went hurtling past.
> The two men, who had for so long lived together as brothers, were cut to pieces, locked together in their terrible embrace. The mangled bodies were later discovered, their heads and feet severed, still clasped together as if trying to strangle each other.[38]

The indifference of the mighty and violent machine is made more acute in the very last passages, where it continues its way across towns and cities, at a vertiginous speed, ignorant of the things, the people and the places around it:

> The locomotive, now completely out of control, continued on its precipitous course. At last she could have her own way and give reign to her youthful high

[37]Emile Zola, *The Beast Within* (trans. by Roger Whitehouse). London: Penguin, 2007(1890). Chapter 12, p.378.
[38]Emile Zola, *Ibid*. pp.408-9.

> spirits, like an untamed horse that has escaped from its trainer and gallops off across the open country. (...)The train no longer whistled as it approached signals or stations; it simply forged ahead like a dumb animal charging head down at some obstacle that barred its way. On and on it went, unstoppable, as if gradually driven to a frenzy by the harsh sound of its own breathing. (...)
> What did it matter if a few people were killed as it went on its way? Was it not travelling towards the future? Why worry over a little spilled blood? The train ran on without a driver, on and on, like some mindless, unseeing beast, let loose on a field of carnage, with its burden of cannon fodder, the soldiers, dead with fatigue, drunk and singing at the top of their voices.[39]

The passage above abounds in animal imagery related to the locomotive. Indeed, Zola paints 'La Lison' as an untamed blood-thirsty beast and is personified as a woman. The latter awakens Jacques's murderous impulses (as is the case each time he encounters a woman and is urged to flee his desires that provoke a criminal tendency in him –Séverine is the perfect example of this and his last victim) while the former reflects the beast nature within himself, his sinful instinct-based self. Aunt Phasie confirms it to Jacques, in one of her moments of pondering, when she says the train is 'a fine invention; there's no denying it. It gets people about quickly, it broadens the mind ... But a beast will always be a beast. You can go on inventing better machines till the cows come home. It won't change a thing. In the end we're at the mercy of beasts.'[40] It is here an illustration of progress amidst chaos and human vice, light within darkness.[41]

---

[39] Emile Zola, *Op.cit.* pp.409-10.
[40] Emile Zola, *Op.cit.* Chapter 2, p.95.
[41] Details on the whole set of train symbolism in Zola's *The Beast Within* is documented by Christophe Reffait's 'Présentation', in Emile Zola, *La Bête humaine*, Paris : Flammarion, 2007 (1890), pp.07-39, and his 'Dossier', pp.403-442. See also Jacques Noiray, *Le Romancier et la Machine : l'image de la machine dans le roman français (1850-1900)*, vol.1, 'L'univers de Zola', José Corti, 1981 ; Roger Ripoll, *Réalité et mythe chez Zola*, Honoré Champion, 1981.

Among the American writers who have been heavily influenced by Zola and who have overtly acknowledged it are Upton Sinclair and Frank Norris. If Sinclair's *TJ* bears the heavy imprint of the French naturalist's *Germinal* in relation to themes inherent in urban settings (determinism, the city as crashing force, exploitation of the lower classes and the simple workers, the horrific working conditions in the industrial milieu, and the spirit of revolution forecasting change), Norris's *The Octopus* –as stated earlier on– takes much from *Germinal, La Bête humaine* and *La Terre*. Norris's railway novel draws its revolutionary spirit from *Germinal*, its theme of agrarian value from *La Terre*, and its train and railway symbolism from *La Bête humaine*. His book features California land labourers in their stiff struggle against the proliferation of the railway system over their agricultural lands, putting them thus at stake. This wide train system is embodied by the image of the octopus whose tentacles strangle its victims. The struggle between wheat planters and the greedy railway corporations, as portrayed by the author, is fierce and way too unfair; it symbolises the struggle between agriculture and industry, pastoralism and modernity:

> For a moment the silence was profound, unbroken.
>
> Then, faint and prolonged, across the levels of the ranch, he heard the engine whistling for Bonneville. Again and again, at rapid intervals in its flying course, it whistled for road crossings, for sharp curves, for trestles; ominous notes, hoarse, bellowing, ringing with the accents of menace and defiance; and abruptly Presley saw again, in his imagination, the galloping monster, the terror of steel and steam, with its single eye, cyclopean, red, shooting from horizon to horizon; but saw it now as the symbol of a vast power, huge, terrible, flinging the echo of its thunder over all the reaches of the valley, leaving blood and destruction in its path; the leviathan, with tentacles of steel clutching

> into the soil, the soulless Force, the iron-hearted Power, the monster, the Colossus, the Octopus.[42]

The major difference between Norris's *The Octopus* and Zola's *La Bête humaine* is in the closing message. Actually, both novels start with the train whistle and rustle and develop along a plot that casts light on the machine as a fierce monster, a violent killing machine. The ending, however, is different. While Zola's work keeps the monster crashing on people, following its indifferent course towards progress, Norris's novel ends with a touch of hope that things will be good for wheat, and a touch of romantic idealism related to the land. *The Octopus*, embodying the sea predator extending its tentacles from the Pacific coasts to the inner farmlands of California, denounces people's exploitation (the working class), the industrial capitalism which precipitated the urbanisation of the Western frontier, and the destruction of the countryside, or the pastoral. On the other hand, it is optimistic in that the workers' union and protest will help cast light on the corrupted world of the railway system.

The same denunciation, fight and resistance coming from workers in the railway industry are depicted by Sembène Ousmane's *God's Bits of Wood* (*Les Bouts de bois de Dieu,* 1960). This novel can also be traced back to Zola's *La Bête humaine* (for the image of the train as a monster and a murderer, and the railway system as an exploiting corrupt institution), as well as to *Germinal* (because of its

[42]Frank Norris, *The Octopus, A Story of California* by Frank Norris (1901), (Gutenberg Project, PDF) Book One, Chapter One, p.24.

treatment of the railway corporations and their exploitation of the poor/provincial workers, the strikes born out of discontent, and the workers' unions).[43]

Zola's *Germinal* (1885) gives the reader the image of the machine evoking a black snake. Indeed, adding to the image of the train as a wild horse, in *La Bête humaine* (to be carefully distinguished from Emily Dickinson's idealistic 'iron horse' in 'The Railway Train'), and an octopus, in Norris's *The Octopus*, Zola's mining novel gives the picture of the underground mine wagons as a dormant reptile. Here again, the image of the predator is reflected:

> Trains of tubs, full or empty, continually passed, crossing each other with their thunder, borne into the shadow by vague beasts trotting by like phantoms. On the double way of a shunting line a long, black serpent slept, a train at standstill, with a snorting horse, whose crupper looked like a block fallen from the roof.[44]

It is this image that Ngugi will focus on in relation to the train in his novels, especially in *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and *Petals of Blood* (1977). For the author who, like Norris and Sinclair, overtly declared having been inspired by Zola's works to write his own, the railway and the train are 'bad omen' for African nations' future. The invention, introduced in Africa by the Europeans with the help of some African rulers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, offers dark prospects as to both the geographical and the human transformation. As a matter of fact, the wild inlands, the

[43]Ousmane Sembène, *Les Bouts de bois de Dieu*. Paris: Le Livre Contemporain, (1960), & London: William Heinemann AWS, 1962. Translation in English by Francis Price as *God's Bits of Wood*.
[44]In Zola's *Germinal*, 1885, translation by Havelock Ellis (1894), Everyman's Library .(PDF.) Part 1, Chapter 3, p.27.

dense forests and the fauna of the continent were the first direct victims of the invention. But the latter's propagation with the greed of financial and industrial capitalism through its corporations system also threatened the indigenous people's lives since farming and cattle growing were the primary source of living. Ngugi, a revolutionary figure, not only objected to the introduction of industrial capitalism into African lands but also firmly denounced its exploiting character and insatiable appetite at the expense of African lands and people.

In the light of this, the image of the train evoking a snake –very much inspired by Zola's– can only refer to the evil side of the machine. Considering the context against which Ngugi has always fought, it is obvious that the train is not an ideal 'Celestial Railroad' but a tempting snake, leading to people's fall and decline.

In *A Grain of Wheat*, the author –adopting a highly ironic tone– describes the train and the railway station as respectively, an object and a place of wonder:

> Later, the railway platform became the meeting place for the young. They talked in groups at home, they went for walks in the country, some even went to church; but in their minds was always the train on Sunday. On Sunday afternoon, the passenger train to Kampala and the one to Mombasa met at Rung'ei station. People did not go there, as it might be thought, to meet friends arriving from Mombasa, Kisumu or Kampala – they just went there to meet one another, to talk, to gossip, to laugh. Love-affairs were often hatched there; many marriages with their attendant cry of woe or joy had their origin at the station platform.[45]

[45]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *A Grain of Wheat*. New York: Penguin, 2002, 'Introduction' by Abdulrazak Gurnah. PDF. Chapter 7. p.83.

The train station becomes thus a place of social gatherings, where new relationships were born, where people could just sit and spend 'leisure' time. The intrusion of the train is not limited to the lands; the machine has marked its presence in the life of the local people. It was permeating their indigenous culture and was slowly but surely transforming it. The machine grew so addictive to the people that it 'became an obsession: if you missed it, sorrow seized your heart for the rest of the week; you longed for the next train. Then Sunday came, you went there on time, and immediately you were healed.'[46] Interestingly enough, people integrated the train into their everyday life and their local culture. They managed to combine elements from their folklore with this invention. Thus, 'From the station they normally went to dance in Kinenie Forest overlooking the Rift Valley. (…) The conventions governing the dances in the wood were well understood.'[47]

The ritualisation of the railway station meetings over which people were obsessed is related by the author as a sign of subjection to the intruder, if one considers the highly ironic and satirical tone he adopts. The station parades are followed by a tribal tradition: a dance in the forest. This might suggest a reconciliation between the wilderness and civilisation. However, while celebrating nature through the tribal dance (which is part of the African traditional life), these Kenyans are also celebrating modernity and the intruder's civilisation by embracing the train into their folk tradition. This instance is reminiscent of the cola-nut breaking along with the Christian prayer compromise that Umuofians performed to welcome Obi Okonkwo back to Nigeria after his long stay in England, in Achebe's *NLE*. The train becomes, therefore,

---

[46]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Op.cit.*
[47]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Op.cit.*

a means of reconciliation between two divergent cultures (the Western and the African), but most importantly, two antagonistic forces (the colonisers and the colonised).

The station itself symbolised civilisation. On the station platform, people felt compelled to adopt new manners, Western manners, and forget about past Sunday fights. Figuratively, the train will sweep away from the green pastures of Africa for good. 'At the platform things were different. Nobody thought of starting a fight. There, the man who beat you the previous Sunday and took away your woman, was a friend. You talked and laughed together. But he knew later in the wood you would look for a chance to stab him and take away his woman.'[48] Ironically, they would go back to their enmities and antagonisms in the woods but not on the station platform. The railway station even substituted the church as people would go there on Sundays and unions were formed on the platform.

The train became even an object of desire for Kenyans. People like Mumbi would identify with it:

> Mumbi often went to the station on Sundays. The rattling train always thrilled her. At times she longed to be the train itself. But she never went to the dances in the forest. She always came back home, after the train, and with one or two other girls, would cook, or undo and re-do their hair. Her dark eyes had a dreamy look that longed for something the village could not give. She lay in the sun and ardently yearned for a life in which love and heroism, suffering, and martyrdom were possible.[49]

[48]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Op.cit*. p.84
[49]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Op.cit*. p.87

Mumbi, one of the novel's key characters, identifies herself with the machine, which becomes her object of desire. She wishes she could have the magnet attraction of the machine, as if it were her rival dethroning her from her privileged position as a seductive woman enjoying men's admiration for her physical beauty. She does not go to the woods dance because she is repulsed by village life, quite incompatible with her dreams, which are triggered by the 'thrilling' train.

The author's view of the train as an 'iron snake', as an intruder, and as an agent of colonisation is suggested by his sarcasm. In his novel's earlier chapters, he depicts the distrustful attitude of the natives towards the foreign invention intruding on their lands. In the train's early days on Kenyan lands, 'men, women and children deserted Thabai for a whole week when the iron snake, foreseen by the Gikuyu seer, first appeared on the land, they kept discreet silence' until news came 'that the snake was harmless, that the red strangers themselves were touching it.'[50] The notion of harm here is obviously totally unknown to the villagers since the train itself was an unknown intruder. Later on, it became the object of divination and idolatry for the villagers; it became 'a myth'[51], a source of pride and envy, a privilege not granted to every region, a virtue:

> People claimed that Rung'ei was the first centre with such buildings in all Gikuyu country. Rung'ei had other virtues, too. The iron snake had first crawled along this plain before climbing up the escarpment on its way to Kisumu and Kampala; for a long time Thabai was the envy of many ridges not so graced with a railway line. Even people from ridges bordering the Masai land paid visits once in a while

[50]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Op.cit.* p.82-3
[51]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Op.cit.* p.84

> just to see the train coughing and vomiting smoke as it rattled along. Thabai was proud of Rung'ei. They felt the centre belonged to the ridge, that even the railway line and the train had a mystical union with Thabai; were they not the first to welcome the rail and the train into the heart of the country?[52]

The mystification of the train and its thrilling presence are made ridiculous here through the personification of the machine as 'vomiting smoke' on the native people and their lands and its parallel with the Biblical tempting snake. The depiction of Rung'ei Trading Centre, in Thabai Ridge, where the train made its way to and fro, is the heart of an iron profit-making corrupt business. The word 'iron' is repeated many times to signal the metallic and materialistic quality of people's dreams then. The mystical dimension of the train is also contradicted by the author earlier in his novel through the violence with which the process of its establishment and extension was stained:

> Waiyaki and other warrior-leaders took arms. The iron snake spoken of by Mugo wa Kibiro was quickly wriggling towards Nairobi for a thorough exploitation of the hinterland. Could they move it? The snake held on to the ground, laughing their efforts to scorn. The whiteman with bamboo poles that vomited fire and smoke, hit back; his menacing laughter remained echoing in the hearts of the people, long after Waiyaki had been arrested and taken to the coast, bound hands and feet.[53]

The British forces had then warned the natives as to any protest against the railway tracks buildings and moderated their will of resistance by burying alive, face against the ground, Waiyaki, the leader of the armed fight against the machine's intrusion.

[52] Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Op.cit*. p.82
[53]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Op.cit*. Chapter 2. pp.29-30

It is important to mention the fact that the Africans' first encounter with the locomotive was characterized by fear and hostility. The history of the European railways in Africa is that of injustices, tragedies and high cost in human lives. Indeed, 'Africa's network of railways was started in 1852 in Alexandria, Egypt and continued until the 1960's'[54] for different reasons, including trade, wars against anti-colonialist militants, control and monopoly over different regions, and the mining industry. Needless to say, no profit from the whole railway business went to the local inhabitants. While some rulers embraced this European invention with a progressive view, hoping for a better future, others 'were suspicious and disapproving. They could see that a railway not only changed the geographical landscape but also the landscape of power and trade. The Damal of Cayor, Lat Dior Diop, in Senegal was adamant in his opposition.'[55] The latter declared boldly to French Governor Servatius, 'As long as I live, be assured, I shall oppose, with all my might the construction of this railway.'[56] It is thus clear that the primary attitude of the indigenous Africans and their rulers towards the intrusion of the train in their rural areas was motivated by hostility, revolt and resistance.

It is with this spirit, a decade after publishing *A Grain of Wheat*, that Ngugi expressed the same antagonism towards the train in *PB*. Nevertheless, if his tone was satirical and ironic in his former novel, it grew darker and more serious in his latter work. The evil nature of the train, associated with capitalism and exploitation, is

---

[54]The Story of Africa- Africa & Europe 1800-1914 (BBC World Service), In http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/11chapter12.shtml
[55]*Idem.*
[56]*Idem.*

revealed by passages depicting it as a colonial weapon allowing the intruders to set root in African lands. This legacy of colonial power, as seen in *PB*, played a major role in changing drastically the Kenyan landscape, together with highway buildings. Ngugi's hostile attitude towards the machine is translated, here again, through the 'iron snake' image. It is given a typically Biblical signification referring to it as an agent of sin. Munira's fancies over Wanja reflect this parallel between the locomotive and 'the snake in paradise'[57] leading to a 'sindom of pleasure'[58], or a kingdom of sinful pleasure –the phrase is mentioned twice in chapter four. The parallel is made darker when the 'night' element is added. 'He reached out for her. He felt her recoil, recede. He withdrew, baffled. She would come back and she would suddenly carry him, a willing passenger, on a night train to the sindom of pleasure and leave him there panting, thirsting and hungering for more.'[59] The train as a tempting snake figuratively represents the sinful relationship Kenya has with the Western intruders, the adulterous relation it held with those who freely abuse her and get no retribution –this is how Wanja describes her situation in Ilmorog to Abdulla and Munira.

Therefore, instead of symbolising a 'Celestial Railroad', the machine stands for the foreign force raping African lands. The destination is not, indeed, the 'Celestial City' but the city of vice, the kingdom of sin.

In her *"Wilderness into Civilized Shapes": Reading the Postcolonial Environment*, Laura Wright devotes a chapter to an analytical treatment of the

[57]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood*, New York: Penguin, 2002, chapter 4, p.87
[58]*Ibid.*, p.91
[59]*Ibid.*, p.87

environment in Ngugi's *PB* and Zakes Mda's *Heart of Redness*. She deals with the environmental issue of deforestation and drastic transformation of the original and traditional landscape caused by the machine intrusion:

> Those actions include the transformation of indigenous foot paths to railways and later roads – particularly the Trans-Africa highway– that led to the consumption of oil, the pollution of the air, and the transport of raw materials and people from one place to another. The role of such modes of traversing and ordering the land (on foot and then by railway and later by car) are apparent early in Kenya's colonial history: "in the ten years between 1895 and 1905 the land that we today call Kenya was transformed from a footpath 600 miles long… into a harshly politicized colonial state" (Ochieng' and Atieno-Odhiambo xiv). Ngugi's novel provides an environmental critique of this transformation in its exploration of the railroad and its role in destroying the forests during the colonial period.[60]

She points at the personification whereby the train is so greedy that it eats up the forests and the people of Kenya. 'Of the railroad, the narrator says, "the line had carried wood and charcoal and wattle barks from Ilmorog forests to feed machines and men at Ruwa-ini. It had eaten the forests" (11), and later, the trains "ate our forest… . Then they sent for our young men. They went on swallowing our youth" (115).'[61]

This deforestation was tragic for the weather as well. Wright points out that tree and timber cutting led to severe droughts, a fact related by Muturi:

---

[60]Laura Wright. *"Wilderness into Civilized Shapes": Reading the Postcolonial Environment.* Athens, Georgia & London: The University of Georgia Press, 2010. Introduction: "Imagining the Postcolonial Environment", 'Chapter One: Inventing Tradition and Colonizing the Plants: Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* and Zakes Mda's *Heart of Redness*.' pp. 19-55. p.35 (see pp.35-39 for the railway in Ngugi's *PB*).
[61]*Idem.*

> [T]he land was… covered with forests. The trees called rain. They also cast a shadow on the land. But the forest was eaten by the railway. You remember they used to come for wood as far as here –to feed the iron thing. Aah, they only knew how to eat, how to take away everything. But then, those were Foreigners –white people.[62]

She further explains that the novel serves its author as a means of denunciation of both the railway system and the Trans-Africa highway, both of which have alienated it from its original people:

> This indictment of the railway as a hungry beast parallels the novel's consistent and scathing criticism of the Trans-Africa highway that "cleaved Ilmorog into two halves" (323) and that is responsible for the shape of the "New" Ilmorog in neocolonial Kenya; the highway is rendered as a living being, "animal of the earth" (263), and is indicted for its roles in alienating indigenous peoples from the land and transporting people from agricultural villages to urban centers.[63]

We may note here the fact that the indigenous people face a double alienation: they are first compelled to cope with the white man's intrusion, and they are then forced to accept his importation of technological tools and inventions facilitating his expansion over their own lands. Not only had the Kenyans been deprived of their lands, but they were unable to recognise their original environment because of Kenya's massive urbanisation and industrialization. They felt double estrangement in their country, with this loss of the notion of 'home' for them.

---

[62]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Op.cit.*, chapter 5, p.97
[63]Laura Wright, *Op.cit.*. p.35

In *PB*, the author denounces the exploiting and unfair character of the railway corporations and highway business run by settlers who make profits at the expense of the natives. Both the machine and the highway make faster the transformation of Ilmorog to New Ilmorog –which is a 'tiny' replica of the city. Industrial capitalism and the urbanisation of the local rural environment changed the indigenous people's lives for the worse. Just like the nineteenth-century American farmers, countrymen, and provincials, whose fascination by and appropriation of the locomotive helped the Westward expansion and American imperialistic greed, the neo-colonial Africans' acceptance and integration of the machine in the local panorama helped establish the whole network of railways that rooted the capitalist means of production in Africa for good and facilitated the continent's exploitation of its natural and human resources. As Wright adds, '*Petals of Blood*, in its parallel critiques of both railway and highway, also indicts the neocolonial state for its role in perpetuating these capitalist-originated projects that result in wanton environmental destruction.'[64]

Besides its depiction as a means of exploitation and injustice, the train is also portrayed as a locus of division. This description, quite naturalistic, is found in the works of Maupassant and Zola. As concerns our corpus, the passages illustrating the idea best can be found in *Main Street* and *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

Indeed, while in *MS* it reflects social division, in *CBC*, it reflects both social and racial division. This does not, however, mean that the issue of race is not dealt with in Lewis's novel. The parallels country-city, rich-poor, and Black-White (or natives-

[64]Laura Wright. *Op.cit*., p.35

European settlers) are actually made visible in the train cars, or wagons, since they carry a microcosmic representation of the community. The people boarding the train come from different social strata and the living conditions of passengers can be understood through the examination of their overall appearance and their attitude, since the train journey allows for 'small social gathering', in a confined space and a restricted time –the time of the journey itself, shortened by station halts. Mark Storey, in *Rural Fictions, Urban Realities, A Geography of Gilded Age American Literature*, points at the idea of class distinction on board the train through the carriages hosting passengers:

> Other issues tied up in the experience of the train journey are important here. Garland's opening paragraph also makes a passing reference to the reclining chair, which not only locates the story historically (reclining chairs did not become commonplace in train carriages in America until the 1870s) but also, perhaps more importantly, classifies the narrator: only the middle classes and above could afford to travel in the first-class carriages equipped with reclining chairs, and they were, of course, invariably white. The way in which train carriages implicated the social status of their passengers—ranging from the draftiness of economy cars to the luxury of Pullman carriages, first manufactured in 1864—is important because it is here that many of the stratifications and divisions of nineteenth-century life became especially visible.[65]

Storey further adds that 'Julia Lee, for instance, has written about the "persistent association between the railroad and racial conflict" (346) at the turn of the century,

[65]Mark Storey, *Rural Fictions, Urban Realities, A Geography of Gilded Age American Literature*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, '1. Lines of Time, Sight, and Capital: Train Journeys'. pp.25-53. p.26

fired by the central role that trains played in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case of 1896, and how this reinforced the sense that train carriages were a conspicuous arena for the manifestation of America's fraught racial politics: "rather than having a democratizing effect, the reorganization of spaces served to underscore the categorical differences between groups of people" (351).'[66]

The social discrimination that the train fostered in its attempt to offer a variety of travelling options fitting the purse of each passenger was made mode acute over time and grew to a more serious problem: social ostracism. In reality, the problem developed into psychological issues engendered in the less favourable passengers. It worsened and deepened the feeling of isolation, alienation, and injustice. This is the logical outcome of journeys taken by people from heterogeneous places, origins, and financial conditions:

> The railway produced territories and then took possession of them. It created the precondition needed "to transport not only people but a complex culture and civilization from one place to another, indeed between places that were radically dissimilar in geography, social conditions, economy, and very often climate."[67]

In the African context of Paton's novel, social discrimination and racism occurred in all gathering places where different races were involved. The South African historical context of the late nineteenth-century and the twentieth-century is notoriously known for extremely discriminatory attitudes and behaviours based on

[66]Mark Storey, *Op.cit*., p.26
[67]Christiane Reichart-Burikukiye, 'The Railway in Colonial East Africa : Colonial Iconography and African Appropriation of a New Technology', In *Landscape, Environment and Technology in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, Toyin Falola & Emily Brownell (eds.), New York, London : Routledge, 2012. pp.62-83. p.64. The author is citing, in her quote, James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society,* (New York: Routledge, 1988), pp.2–3.

skin colour and social positions, especially inside the different means of transportation such as trains and buses. Discrimination came from both the personnel and the passengers. Indeed, in 'Southern and East Africa segregation of the staff and their facilities caused friction.'[68]

One good example, in Southern African literature, of the train as a place of racial difference and differentiation is undoubtedly Nadine Gordimer's short story 'The Train from Rhodesia,' (published in *The Soft Voice of the Serpent and Other Stories*, 1952). The author encapsulates a very serious national issue in a short train journey, where the train stops at a desolately poor rural area, offering a sad view of the kind of life the Natives lead, while contrasting it sharply with the highly distinguished people onboard. The opposed worlds of the poor and the rich, the Black and the White, are explained in the microcosmic train carriage that embodies Apartheid-based South Africa.

In Paton's *CBC*, this issue is visible in the early chapters where Reverend Stephen Kumalo boards the train bound for the city, on his quest for his son, Absalom. The author's description of the wagons taken by Natives is quite startling:

> As all country trains in South Africa are, it was full of black travellers. On this train indeed there were not many others, for the Europeans of this district all have their cars, and hardly travel by train any more.
> Kumalo climbed into the carriage for non-Europeans, already full of the humbler people of his race, some

[68] The Story of Africa- Africa & Europe 1800-1914 (BBC World Service), In http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/11chapter12.shtml

> with strange assortments of European garments, some with blankets over their strange assortment, some with blankets over the semi-nudity of their primitive dress, though these were all women. Men travelled no longer in primitive dress.
> The day was warm, and the smell strong in the carriage. But Kumalo was a humble man, and did not much care. They saw his clerical collar, and moved up to make room for the umfundisi. He looked around, hoping there might be someone with whom he could talk, but there was no one who appeared of that class.[69]

Paton paints the picture, sadly common in his country, of separation and segregation on the basis of race and skin colour, on board the train. He makes explicit the fact that the Europeans do not take trains anymore because for them, they should be spared for the native Africans as they suggest a low social stratus. The description of the different African passengers on the train –some of whom were tastelessly emulating the Europeans, while others were oddly-dressed– reflects the Fanonian concept of the inferiority complex, leading the natives to copy the colonisers' way of dressing in an attempt to elevate themselves to their social rank. The passengers who travelled in their tribal clothes are those who are not familiar with the train. Like Ngugi, who adopts an ironic tone when depicting the native Kenyans' sudden change of manners on the train platform in *A Grain of Wheat*, Paton bitterly points at the humiliating mannerisms some native Africans unconsciously make in order to 'feel' European. During his trip, Kumalo also notices the bad smells and ignores them out of his humbleness. He is a man of his people and does not allow himself to be vain. He is, above all, a respectable reverend whose spirituality calls for equality, justice, and

[69]Alan Paton, *Cry, the Beloved Country*, New York: Scribner, 1987 (1948),PDF, Book 1, Chapter 3, p.51

humanism. But most importantly, he is deeply aware of the fact that the state in which his kinsmen are is caused by the foreign intruders and the discriminatory system they established on their very lands.

The first chapters of Paton's first book abound in passages where the train is depicted in a seemingly romantic way. It is akin to mid and late nineteenth-century American poetry and fiction featuring the locomotive in a dream-like scenery, crossing colourful fields and stunning nature. The difference is that the train in *CBC* takes passengers from desolate areas associated with the Natives to busy, prosperous, and lively regions where the White settlers live, indifferent at the sufferings of the indigenous people. The train, in Paton's most prominent novel about the possibility of race reconciliation, marks racial separation and class distinction. The carriages of the machine where the Black people sit are portrayed in a miserable state; they reflect dirt, dust, heat, and poverty. To the Native South Africans, however, the train is a ray of hope since it serves them as the means that takes them on their exodus out of the country and into the 'great city' of Johannesburg, where there is a possibility for them to find a job.

The picture delivered by Lewis's *Main Street*, in relation to the point aforementioned, is not quite different mainly when considering the way the writer describes the train wagons, as well as the people who board them. Perhaps what makes the portrait slightly less somber is the fact that there is no literal context of the coloniser-colonised rapport in *MS*.

Carol Kennicott, the novel's protagonist, is repulsed by all that is related to the countryside. On a hot and dusty September day, she boards the N°7 way train crossing the large Midwestern landscape going to Minnesota. She is heading to the town where she will live with her husband, Will, the country doctor. On the train, she seems quite annoyed by the 'irritable clank and rattle beneath a prolonged roar' of the 'moving mass of steel' in which there was a 'sharp scent of oranges cutting the soggy smell of unbathed people and ancient baggage.'[70]

Lewis then devotes almost two pages to the descriptions of the passengers onboard the train. This is particularly meant to make the atmosphere in which his heroine travels more pathetic, as if seeking the reader's empathy and understanding of her dislike of country life. They add to Carol's irritation provoked by the train noises and smells. As to the comfort in the carriage, there is none, as Carol notices, 'there is no porter, no pillows, no provision for beds, but all today and all tonight they will ride in this long steel boxfarmers with perpetually tired wives and children who seem all to be of the same age; workmen going to new jobs; travelling salesmen with derbies and freshly shined shoes.'[71]

Further on, Carol is shocked by the dirt, noise and smell of the fellow passengers whom she immediately judges as ignorant. The different races she lists in her description, including Slovenes and Norwegians, indicate that the train marks class separation, just like in Paton's *CBC*. As seen by Carol, already stifling before her village life concretely starts, country folks are commonplace, poor, dirty, and noisy.

[70]Sinclair Lewis, *Main Street*, New York: The Library of America, 1992, Chapter 3, I, p.24
[71]*Idem.*

She is almost fainting as the 'smell grows constantly thicker, more stale.'[72] This is one of the main reasons urging her to leave Gopher Prairie and go to Washington:

> They are parched and cramped, the lines of their hands filled with grime; they go to sleep curled in distorted attitudes, heads against the window-panes or propped on rolled coats on seat-arms, and legs thrust into the aisle. They do not read; apparently they do not think. They wait.[73]

Not much is said about the train in Crane's *Maggie*, while in Sinclair's *The Jungle*, there are many passages describing the railway system in Chicago and its suburban area, with particular focus on its link with industrial capitalism and the transportation of merchandise via freight trains.

One feature of the machine, common to both *Maggie* and *TJ*, is the fact that it is a symbol of death for human beings. When Maggie returns home, she is met with hostility. As she ultimately turns back to leave, she is associated with a rapid train which smashes people on its way:

> Maggie turned and went.
> The crowd at the door fell back precipitately. A baby falling down in front of the door, wrenched a scream like a wounded animal from its mother. Another woman sprang forward and picked it up, with a chivalrous air, as if rescuing a human being from an on-coming express train.[74]

---

[72]Sinclair Lewis, *Op.cit.*, p.25
[73]Sinclair Lewis, *Op.cit.*, p.24
[74]Stephen Crane, *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*, Adrian Hunter (ed.), Ontario, Canada: Broadview Editions, 2006. Chapter 15, p.77.

The image of the woman catching a baby who had fallen on the floor as if it were to be crushed by an express train refers to the danger of Maggie's presence in the tenements buildings. Indeed, because of her promiscuous and immoral life, she is feared as a potential threat (symbolically here, staining the innocence of the baby who fell). Her sin is so big that her neighbours associate her with a killing machine, here the train, which reminds us again of the sin-inducing snake. This idea is reinforced by Sinclair when he features Jurgis's long journey on foot after his release from Bridewell. In the suburbs of Chicago, Jurgis notices that 'Every few blocks there would be a railroad crossing on the level with the sidewalk, a deathtrap for the unwary (...)'.[75]

Despite the fact that the train takes on various evil connotations, fitting the literary context of their production, it helped desperate characters reach new destinations in their attempt to flee everyday boredom and suffering.

In *Main Street*, all the characters leave Gopher Prairie on board the train, including Carol –though, after her two-year-stay in Washington, she comes back home, to the small village. Likewise, Jagua flees her unfaithful husband and her provincial life for Lagos on board the train. In *The Jungle*'s middle chapters, Jurgis leaves for the Chicago suburbs after Ona's death. His short leave in the rural outskirts of Chicago and his temporary work there allow him to forget his own sorrows. It helps him soothe his soul and alleviate the weight of grief over his recent losses.

Train and Pastoral symbolism are, therefore, tightly linked. The train (the machine or the locomotive), as a modern technological invention, allows three kinds of movements: a movement in space, a movement in time, and a movement in the psyche

[75]Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*, chapter 18, p.103

–or a movement inward. As to the first movement, the train allows people to go from the village/town to the city and from the city back to the village/town. This is what is referred to as journey in space. The second movement, referred to as journey in time, has a symbolic dimension despite the fact that its results are as tangible as those of the first one. It is an ever-forward movement: there is no going back to the past since it is left far behind; the temporal destination is always the future; and the present is so short-lived that it is ungraspable. Concerning the movement in the psyche, or the journey into the inner self, it implies the move from one mental/psychological state to another. One instance is the reaction of some provincials who, once in the city, put on the 'clothes' of city-dwellers in terms of attitude, manners, and overall behaviour. If in their native province they tend to be rather 'rough', in the city they become soft-mannered. This inner journey also implies a change in the state of mind with a change of milieu, which often leads characters to change certain decisions or thoughts just because they are in places other than their own. In other words, a change of milieu provokes a change in the mental/ psychological state of the individual. In sum, the train allows the spatio-temporal shift –which is external– and a psychological shift (from one mental state to another) –which is internal.

Alan Paton sums up the hustle and bustle of trains and railway lines around Johannesburg in a way approximating the romantics':

> Railway-lines, railway-lines, it is a wonder. To the left, to the right, so many that he cannot count. A train rushes past them, with a sudden roaring of sound that makes him jump in his seat. And on the other side of them, another races beside them, but drops slowly behind. Stations, stations, more than he has ever

> imagined. People are waiting there in hundreds, but the train rushes past, leaving them disappointed.[76]

Nadine Gordimer supports this picture with one of her own, also reminding us of the romantics':

> The train called out, along the sky; but there was no answer; and the cry hung on: I'm coming. . . I'm coming . . .
> The engine flared out now, big, whisking a dwindling body behind it; the track flared out to let it in.
> Creaking, jerking, jostling, gasping, the train filled the station. 1252
> (…) The train had cast the station like a skin. It called out to the sky, I'm coming, I'm coming; and again, there was no answer. 1255[77]

It could be suggested then that the country people's escape from the countryside to the city is comparable to a Biblical exodus (a massive exodus) in the *modern* sense of the term. As seen, they move away from the Pastoral in search of freedom and material well-being under the name of Manifest Destiny (which can, to some extent, be applied to the characters of the African corpus since most of them answer the call of the city –it can be regarded as the African's Manifest Destiny to go on a journey to the urban kingdom). This exodus –the perverted version of the Old Testament's– can only be made possible with the machine. The latter is the means that allows country people or provincials (Carrie, the folks leaving Gopher Prairie; Joseph and Obi; Jagua Nana; John, Gertrude and Absalom Kumalo; and Jurgis's folks from Lithuania) to leave the

[76]Alan Paton, *Cry, the Beloved Country*, New York: Scribner, 1987 (1948), PDF, Book 1, Chapter 3, 56
[77]Nadine Gordimer, 'The Train from Rhodesia,' (*The Soft Voice of the Serpent and Other Stories*) (1952) in *British Literature*, Glencoe, ILL: Glencoe, 2009.

stifling countryside and head for the ‘welcoming’ –yet cunning– city symbolising the realisation of their dreams.

The authors of the novels considered make it clear that the intrusion and the development of industrial capitalism, whether in America or in Africa, marked the end of the countryside or the province. What was part of the pastoral is now part of the past, an irretrievable episode in the history of both continents. Railways and highways expansion at the expense of Nature estranged people and alienated them from their own culture, once environment-based. The prospects of prosperity and progress hid the hideous face of technology and promised the modern man craving the material abundance and independence. It is only when the railway system secured its place in a formerly rural environment that man realised the hollowness of his dreams. The metropolis, welcoming its new children arms wide-open, promises even more of the material things man aspired to have. It is in this spiral of perpetual dream-chasing that the selected authors picture their main –and, sometimes, minor– characters, who are played with, to and fro, like the ebb and flow of life, from the rural to the urban milieu, and then from the urban to the rural milieu, in search of an environment that would not be hostile to their worldly ambitions.

C-The Waste Land: The Pastoral as “Ashland”’

The American novels very often contain stories of journeys leading their protagonists to experience illuminating adventures. In fact, the theme of the eventful and instructive journey is a very old theme in world literatures. It is indeed present in

the Holy Scriptures and is prevalent in the *Bible* (the most obvious instance is the *Old Testament*'s book of *Exodus*).[78] In fact, this theme can be traced back to as remote a time as the primitive Man who had always sought to improve his life and to cope with difficult conditions (the most noteworthy of which is the hostile environment and weather). It is thus a natural human impulse, a genetic drive, to try to improve one's life by moving somewhere else, somewhere one thinks better than the actual habitat. The dire living conditions in the world in the nineteenth-century and the beginning of the twentieth-century fostered this will to change the milieu for a more prosperous life. The movement West, whether motivated by religious, economic or imperialistic drives, is part of the theme of journey, which bore different labels such as pilgrimage, exodus, and migration.

The difference in the novels under study is that the realist and naturalist authors insist on the stifling aspect of the countryside (or the pastoral), which is why its inhabitants tend to leave it, as for them this becomes a question of survival. In the whole body of the selected novels, there are characters that are constantly moving. The major characters and the secondary characters also go on a journey out of the countryside. For some it is a permanent leave; for others it is temporary. The only character who does not 'move' is Maggie since the novel's setting is New York (the novel's subtitle stresses the fact that it is 'A Story of New York'). What helps all of them move is obviously the train (with a few exceptions, though, as concerns the means of transportation).

It is worth mentioning that the theme of journey out of the countryside towards the city is present in Flaubert's *MB* and Zola's Rougon-Macquart cycle. Therefore,

[78] See Northrop Frye's *Biblical and Classical Myths*.

considering the influence of the French Naturalists under study would be quite relevant. It is, however, important to tackle first some notions that are related to the 'ashland' aspect of the province both in African and American literatures.

Indeed, among the important notions to explain is the so much needed 'quest' for a better life that the main (and, sometimes, minor) characters aspire to. What is interesting to mention here is the parallel between two quests (also referred to in this research as impulses): the Westward quest for Walden Vs the Eastward quest for the city/civilisation.[79] This implies that the characters in the selected novels react in two major ways, and go on two opposed journeys: the journey bound for the city (thus fleeing the province), and the journey bound for the wild or the small town (thus fleeing the city and going back to the province).

Our concern in this chapter is to examine the characters' escape from the country life to the city, an impulse translated as a Biblical exodus, a massive migration to the metropolis. What is noteworthy here is the point that the novels' protagonists experience a dream shifting process. They move from a pastoral dream to an urban dream. However, since they are met with the cunning seducer (in other words, the city) whose major intention towards the lost individual is to lure and then trap them, their dream in doomed to fail. For the Africans, there is a double dystopia since lands with a typically African stamp have long been lost, either taken by the colonisers or transformed by the latter to fit their imperialistic needs (industrial and commercial).

The poem Obi writes when he was on his journey in England bears all the mourning of the author as to the irretrievable loss of the pastoral:

---

[79]See Richard V. Francaviglia, *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2011.

How sweet it is to lie beneath a tree
At eventime and share the ecstasy
Of jocund birds and flimsy butterflies;
How sweet to leave our earthbound body in its mud,
And rise towards the music of the spheres,
Descending softly with the wind,
And the tender glow of the fading sun.[80]

The essence of Achebe's view of Nature and its loss in *NLE* is summed up in this highly nostalgic poem. Even if the author links the remoteness of a pure past life to a lack of morality in the countryside, his main point is to parallel the issue of identity loss with land loss. Symbolically here, it is the journey to the land of the colonisers that makes Obi lose all sense of belonging.

The province, therefore, turns out to be a "wasteland", a "heap of ashes", the very terms used by Munira and by the narrator in *PB*. The term Ashland is the highly symbolic name of the avenue in Chicago, in the opening paragraphs of the first chapter in *The Jungle*, where Jurgis's and Ona's wedding procession passes –a sign indicating that their life will be shattered in the city, and by the city, and their dreams will turn to ashes after their metropolitan journey.

Ngugi's *PB* and Paton's *CBC* are good illustrations of the idea of the countryside as a wasteland. If Ekwensi's *JN* and Achebe's *NLE* are predominantly novels about Lagos –even if *JN* clearly tackles the dichotomy countryside/village Vs city–, *PB* and *CBC* are quite telling about the state of desolation the countryside had reached in modern Africa, which they overtly relate to the effects of colonisation. Although the two novels end on an optimistic note as to revolutionary changes in the

[80]Chinua Achebe. *No Longer at Ease*. Oxford: Heinemann AWS, 1960. Chapter 2, pp.14-15.

future of Africa, they display the rural and village areas are alarmingly deteriorated. The direct result of this land degradation is the massive exodus of the native youth towards urban spaces. In other words, the native Africans flee their degenerated lands in search of regeneration. The great irony is that in the metropolis, they will be further degenerated and dehumanised.

The degradation of the countryside is so considerable that the villagers are dragged out of it by the irresistible call of the city. The characters in *PB* feel the urge to leave the rural environment as a result of a deep feeling of repulsion at the miserable state of Ilmorog, and the rural areas in general. Indeed, 'Ilmorog is transfigured or rather transmogrified by the arrival of capitalism. The dog of capitalism comes with all its fleas and rabies, burying Old Ilmorog and putting a New Ilmorog in its place.'[81] This transformation is radical and it is due to capitalism. Ilmorog, as described by Ngugi, has not always been a dull place though:

> Ilmorog, the scene of the unfolding of this drama, had not always been a small cluster of mud huts lived in only by old men and women and children with occasional visits from wandering herdsmen. It had had its days of glory: thriving villages with a huge population of sturdy peasants who had tamed nature's forests and, breaking the soil between their fingers, had brought forth every type of crop to nourish the sons and daughters of men. How they toiled together, clearing the wilderness, cultivating, planting: how they all fervently prayed for rain and deliverance in times of drought and pestilence! And at harvest-time they would gather in groups, according to ages, and dance from village to village, spilling into Ilmorog plains, hymning praises to their founders. In those days, there were no vultures in the sky waiting for the

[81] Moses Isegawa, 'Introduction', Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood*. PDF. London: Penguin Group, 2002. (Oxford, & Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1977). p.xvii.

> carcasses of dead workers, and no insect-flies feeding
> on the fat and blood of unsuspecting toilers.[82]

It was once a harmonious communal space, where the villagers were one with the land and where there was no exploiting power threatening to make a profit of their labour at the expense of their prosperity. Yet, with the intrusion of the white settlers and their instruments of economic imperialism, the small village lost its prestigious lustre and became unfamiliar to its once inhabitants. Ilmorog became thus New Ilmorog due to industrialisation, trade, transportation, and urbanisation. When Munira takes Karega, at the latter's return after a five-year exile, to see Abdulla and Wanja, we are given the description of New Ilmorog through a biblical parallel with one of its small districts called New Jerusalem. The irony with which this allegorical description is given is striking since, instead of evoking a refuge or a haven to its new comers and instead of representing a 'Promised Land' for them, New Jerusalem is featured as a shabby place where shanties, bars, and shops (of roasted meat) flourish, and where there is promiscuity (Wanja's brothel being there). While Ilmorog is repulsive and dull, and while it can no longer keep its children in its lap, New Ilmorog attracts them back. The issue here is that its original dwellers are estranged and cannot recognise it anymore so much it has changed. In fact, the 'land seemed not to yield much and there was now no virgin soil to escape to as in those days before colonialism. His sons had gone away to European farms or to the big towns.'[83] Actually, the pastoral land has disappeared under the advent of industrial capitalism making, thus, impossible the dream to find shelter in the countryside.

---

[82]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood*, Part Two: 'The Journey', chapter 1. PDF. London: Penguin Group, 2002 (Oxford, & Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1977). p.133.
[83]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Ibid.*, Part One, chapter 2, p.25. (p.09, Oxford, & Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1977).

The notion of wasteland is primarily important when dealing with the theme of journey. In fact, it is the degradation of the farm lands and rural areas, and their later disappearance, which make it a necessity for villagers to move out of them and go to the metropolis. In the opening page of the first chapter of *PB*, Munira describes Ilmorog as a wasteland.[84] A few pages further, the narrator wonders who 'would want to settle in this wasteland (…).'[85] Karega engages in the same thoughts, by the end of part one:

> For to confront Ilmorog, this poverty – and drought-stricken, depopulated wasteland; to confront the expectant eyes of those who tomorrow would run away to the cities whose cruelty he had experienced and where they would face a future which held the hope of a thousand mirages, was at once to confront himself in a way more profound and painful because the problem and the questions raised went beyond mere personal safety and salvation. It seemed to him, looking at the drought, at the tiny faces, at the lack of any development in the area – where, he wondered, were the benefits of modern science? – a collective fate to which they were all condemned.
>
> It was hopeless: it was a gigantic deception.[86]

The modernity brought by the colonisers does not seem to have reached such small villages like Ilmorog. On the contrary, it worsened their state and made its inhabitants jump into the cruel claws of cities. The price for modernity was costing the native Africans everything they owned: their lands, their identity and their life. The whole situation is a dystopia, a dream turned upside-down by the white intruders and the neo-colonial ruling class.

---

[84]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Op.cit.*, Part One, chapter 1, p.18. (p.02, Oxford, & Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1977).
[85]*Ibid.*, chapter 2, p.22. (p.05, Oxford, & Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1977)
[86]*Ibid.*, chapter 6, p.124. (p.110, Oxford, & Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1977).

In the novels under examination, numerous are the characters who flee the countryside and go to the city in search of better living conditions, and most often, for survival's sake. Indeed, Jagua, Carol Kennicott and the Gopher Prairie people, the Kumalos (except for Stephen), Carrie and the people of Ilmorog all leave the province for the big metropolis after realising the fact that they can no longer stand the country life. The conversation between Munira and Wanja reveals the latter's dislike of her village life:

> 'Why did you leave those places you talk about, the coast, the cities, Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kisumu, and come here? Why don't you go back?'
> 'Why not indeed?' She suddenly said, angry, but somehow Munira felt that she was restless and quarrelling about something else. 'I hate Ilmorog. I hate the countryside – so boring! I could do with clean tap water. Electric light and a bit of money.'[87]

The dullness of Ilmorog is so unbearable for its inhabitants that it becomes sickly. Wanja adds that she is 'really tired of this wretched hole.'[88] She feels she is doomed to suffocate in her village and, thus, she needs to disentangle herself from its grip. In a discussion she has with Abdulla, who tries to convince her not to leave Ilmorog, she confesses that she cannot stay:

> 'Wanja, you also listen to me. (...) Stay in Ilmorog. Let us face what you call this hole together. The wages that I would give you will now become shares.

[87]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Op.cit.*, (Introduction by Moses Isegawa) , part one, chapter 4, p.90.
[88]*Ibid.*, p.91.

> You and I will be joint-owners of this business. It is not much to offer, but it is offered sincerely. But don't go away.'
>
> Wanja controlled her tears with difficulty. She understood what he said and even more the sincerity behind the offer. But she could not accept: there was that within her that urged her to go away now that she knew that her visit had come to nought. But even if – how could she stay in Ilmorog?
>
> 'Abdulla, you have a big heart. You make me feel I want to cry. I am a wicked woman. Do you know why I came to Ilmorog? Why did you? Why did Munira here? Mine, Abdulla, is a long and a short story. Maybe I'll come back. But I feel as if I've a debt to settle with the world, out there.'[89]

In parallel, the charming voices of the city speak to the very soul of the country fugitives. Its call, that of the material temptations, cannot be left unanswered. Nyakinyua explains to Munira the causes of the rural exodus and the costs the villagers have to pay in the big cities in order to save their 'life' from the unhealthy countryside atmosphere:

> 'Our young men and women have left us. The glittering metal has called them. They go, and the young women only return now and then to deposit the newborn with their grandmothers already aged with scratching this earth for a morsel of life. They say: there in the city there is room for only one . . . our employers, they don't want babies about the tiny rooms in tiny yards. Have you ever heard of that? Unwanted children? The young men also. Some go and never return. Others sometimes come to see the wives they left behind, make them round-bellied, and quickly go away as if driven from Ilmorog by Uhere or Mutung'u. What should we call them? The new Uhere and Mutung'u generation: for was it not the same skin diseases and plagues that once in earlier

[89]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Op.cit.*, (Introduction by Moses Isegawa) , part one, chapter 4, p.92.

> times weakened our people in face of the Mzungu invasion? Tell me: what then brings you to a deserted homestead?[90]

Even if the villagers know about the evil side of the city from the experiences of those who have preceded them there, they venture to the urban jungle, taking a leap in the dark, in order to flee the village sickening life and overall aspect, which Nakinyua compares to serious skin diseases. For those who take an escape to the urban environment, there is always something new to try, something different to discover, a novel place to explore. There were mainly promises for a better financial situation:

> Ilmorog, the once thriving community of a people who were not afraid to live on the sweat of their hands, started its decline and depopulation. The railway line to Mutesa's court had in any case bypassed Ilmorog. The second European war saw more youth flee Ilmorog to the cities of metallic promises and what was once the centre of trade and farming became just another village, a pale shadow of what it was yesterday . . .[91]

Paton's *CBC* also abounds in instances where characters, either major or secondary, flee the villages of the region of Natal to the suburbs of Johannesburg. The narrator makes it clear, right from the beginning of the novel, that it is a book of journeys. Just like *PB*, which is a novel about the journey of Ilmorog and its people towards a better tomorrow, *CBC* revolves around the journey of South Africa through the sinuous way towards justice and equality, epitomised by the journey of Reverend

[90]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood*, Part One, chapter 2, p.23-4. PDF. London: Penguin Group, 2002 (p.07, Oxford, & Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1977).
[91]*Ibid.,* Part Two, chapter 1, p.136. PDF. London: Penguin Group, 2002 (Oxford, & Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1977).

Stephen Kumalo in search of his sister, Gertrude, and son, Absalom. When he boards the train bound for the gigantic metropolis, he realises that he is heading to the unknown:

> The journey had begun. And now the fear back again, the fear of the unknown, the fear of the great city where boys were killed crossing the street, the fear of Gertrude's sickness. Deep down the fear for his son. Deep down the fear of a man who lives in a world not made for him, whose own world is slipping away, dying, being destroyed, beyond any recall.[92]

He associates the city with the different evils and afflictions of modern Africa, under the Apartheid system, and this engenders a feeling of fear, which is existential. Indeed, Kumalo obviously undergoes a process of identity loss, which is expressed in his loss of a sense of belonging since he no more recognises his own world, the countryside where he has always lived and which is now destroyed.

Ekwensi's Jagua, in *JN*, also goes on a journey bound for Lagos. She too cannot stand her village life and her traditional narrow-minded family-in-law, who keep reminding her of her childlessness. In an attempt to flee her husband's cheating on her and her in-laws' stifling codes, she boards the train and leaves for the city. What triggers her to make up her mind and go away for good is a random visit to the railway station:

> One day when he went to his filling station, leaving the house to her, she dressed up and walked into the streets. She was passing by the Railway Station and on a sudden impulse she went in and asked for the timetable. A young man smilingly told her when the

[92]Alan Paton, *Cry, the Beloved Country*. PDF. New York: Scribner, 1987 (1948), Book 1, Chapter 3, p.52.

> next train would be leaving for L-A-G-O-S. Lagos! The magic name.
>
> *(...)*
>
> When she came away from the railway counter, Jagua felt a sudden uneasiness. There was something sinful in her act, and from that moment on, she began to look at her man with a detached air. To her, he was good as dead. Dead and buried in her heart though he did not know it.[93]

The 'musicality' of the city's name has the same magical effect on her imagination as the name of Paris has on Emma's at the recollection of the unforgettable ball she had been invited to attend and the people she so much wished to resemble and belong to. However, as the train takes Jagua to Lagos, it also takes her to her spiritual and physical degradation; she was on the verge of losing her soul there. This reminds us of Stephen Kumalo's sister, Gertrude, in *CBC*, who goes to Johannesburg in search of her missing husband and who, in her turn, never goes back to her native countryside so much she is crushed by the city's vicious forces. Jagua ends up forsaking her now 'useless' husband and joins the high life of Lagos:

> She cooked for him, but longed for quiet restaurants where the lining was velvet and the music was soft and wine glasses clinked and men spoke in whispers to girls who burst suddenly into outraged laughter but were devils in nylon skins. She stopped taking treatment from the doctor who was giving her something to make her pregnant. Her husband found out and when they quarrelled she was glad. She waited for him to leave for the filling station. They had not been on speaking terms for two whole days.

[93]Cyprian Ekwensi, *Jagua Nana*. PDF. Chapter 22. pp. 167-8

> She caught the train and it was too slow for her mood, taking three days to drop her into Lagos.[94]

Jagua's departure for the city on the train can be paralleled with that of Dreiser's Carrie, in *SC*. In the opening chapter's first paragraph, we see Carrie leaving her rural hometown at eighteen, by the end of the 19th Century, on board the train which takes her to her spiritual and moral degradation, even if the author does not put the blame on Carrie for the different immoral actions she takes and rather adopts a non-judgmental narrative voice. Dreiser says that, at her age, and given the historical context of the story, Carrie has no other option than to fall for vices in the city if she cannot find guiding hands there. The only 'guiding' hands she happens to encounter on the train are Drouet's, the seducing salesman who tempts her into living as a concubine in his flat, in exchange for financial safety. Carrie is so repulsed by the poor living conditions in Columbia City –Wisconsin– and in the Chicago tiny flat of her sister Minnie that she accepts Drouet's proposal of an adulterous life:

> She did not explain that the thought, however, had aroused all the antagonism of her nature. Columbia City—what was there for her? She knew its dull little round by heart. Here was the great mysterious city which was still a magnet for her. What she had seen only suggested its possibilities. Now to turn back on it and live the little old life out there—she almost exclaimed against it as she thought.[95]

[94]Cyprian Ekwensi, *Ibid.*, p.168
[95]Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*. Pennsylvania, 1981. Chapter 07, p.65.

Carrie's resolute decision to dwell in the city and not go back again to her country life is further fostered by the cold weather, which reminds her of the destitution she used to live in:

> "No," she would think. "What else could I do? I was so bad off. Where could I have gone? Not home again—oh, I did not want to go there. I was in danger of being hungry. I had no clothes. Didn't I try?"
>
> "Remember how men look upon what you have done," said the voice.
>
> "I have nice clothes," she would hum to herself in spirit, drowning the urgent voice.
>
> "They make me look so nice. I am safe. The world is not so bad now. It is not so dreadful—what have I done?"
>
> The deference of men to one who pays his dues to them confers this belief at times.
>
> "Step into the streets, return to your home, be as you were. Escape!"
>
> "I can't. I can't," was her only reply.
>
> "Out, woman. Into the streets. Preferably be wretched."
>
> "Where may I go?" she would reply. "I am a poor girl. Look how I was treated. What would they think of me, if I came home?"
>
> "Out of it all," the voice would murmur at last, almost indistinct.
>
> "Oh, my nice clothes," the senses were saying. "Oh, the cold streets. Was that the wind whistling I heard? I have a fine cloak. I have gloves. It would be a machine again without these things. Oh, what can I do, what can I do?"[96]

The inner dialogue between Carrie's reason and heart does not last long and the voice of her heart takes priority over her reason as she justifies her actions with the fact that

[96]Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*. Pennsylvania, 1981. Chapter 10, p.91.

her new life provides her with the protection she needs in order not to fall back again in the abyss of poverty. Dreiser makes it clear that his protagonist is not the kind of person who can be tormented by a psychological dilemma. On the contrary, when a mental conflict over morality and the earthly pleasures arises, she would simply stop thinking about the initial thought provoking this very conflict. She would silence the unwanted voice of truth in order not to confront her reality:

> Thus would she sway, thus would all men, similarly equipped, between this truth and that evil—between this right and that wrong. It is all a weighing of advantage. And whoso is it so noble as to ever avoid evil, and who so wise that he moves ever in the direction of truth?
>
> Such mental conflict was not always uppermost. Carrie was not by any means a gloomy soul. More, she had not the mind (p.91) to get firm hold upon a definite truth. When she could not find her way out of the labyrinth of illogic which thought upon the subject created, she would turn away entirely. (p.92)[97]

Sinclair Lewis's *MS*, just like the novels cited above, also deals with the theme of rural exodus. The move of Carol Kennicott to Gopher Prairie on the train, in the opening chapters, is contrasted by the journey that the Prairie people embark on outside their village. Almost all the characters in the novel leave Gopher Prairie on board the train, including Carol –though she decides to come back home to the small village, after her two-year-stay in Washington. The dullness of the village and the narrow-mindedness of its inhabitants make it impossible for many characters to stay. The reason that led Carol to reconsider the duration of her stay in Washington was the

[97]Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit.*, pp.91-92.

hope that she could realise her dream of village reform and give a new breath to Gopher Prairie, based on her own pioneering ideals of progress and emancipation.

The destruction of the countryside, or the province, and its substitution by the city remains, therefore, the key factor leading the provincials and the villagers out of their rural hometowns. Whether it is in the African context or in the American context, the rural environment recedes in front of the imposing metropolis, which has seemingly way too many opportunities to offer its visitors. As Willa Cather, the novelist of the Prairie *par excellence*, points out, the American Midwest felt like 'the end of everything.'[98] She comes to this conclusion as she moves from her hometown in northern Virginia to the 'treeless prairie' of Nebraska, where the change in the landscape and the disappearance of Nature is noticeable. Her reflection is quite akin to Carol Kennicott's observation about Gopher Prairie, upon her arrival there, being 'the end of the world.' It also reminds us of Fitzgerald's Nick Carraway, who refers to his native Minnesota as being the 'ragged edge of the universe.' The pastoral is desperately dead, and with it, the dreams of a sane sheltering place that would heal the psychological trauma left after an urban experience.

[98]Andrew Jewell & Janis Stout (eds.). *The Selected Letters of Willa Cather*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013. pp.12-13.

Chapter Three

The City: A Place of Virtue or Vice?

Le vice et la vertu sont des produits, comme le vitriol et le sucre.

Hippolyte Taine

Je ne puis habiter Paris parce que j'y agonise indéfiniment.

Guy de Maupassant, ‘Qui sait?’
In *Le Horla et Autres Contes Fantastiques*

D’où viennent ces influences mystérieuses qui changent en découragement notre bonheur et notre confiance en détresse? On dirait que l’air, l’air invisible est plein d’inconnaissables Puissances, dont nous subissons les voisinages mystérieux.

Guy de Maupassant, ‘Le Horla’
In *Le Horla et Autres Contes Fantastiques*

Décidément, tout dépend des lieux et des milieux. (…) Nous subissons effroyablement l’influence de ce qui nous entoure.

Guy de Maupassant, ‘Le Horla’
In *Le Horla et Autres Contes Fantastiques*

A world where money has been elevated to the status of world religion (...).
Moses Isegawa

Introduction

In this chapter, we will deal with the second element of the dichotomy under study namely, the city. Both in American and in African realism and naturalism in fiction, the city comes as a substitute for the countryside, which found its place in the historical context challenged by the rapid advent of urbanisation and the imposing presence of the huge metropolis. Indeed, in the novels selected here –all of which were written in the twentieth century with the exception of Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, published in 1893– the city turns out to be *the* place of plenty and opportunity, where one seeks not only fortune but also refuge from the repulsive state of deterioration of the countryside and its negative impact on one's psychological state –including one's intellectual development. This modern urban context, in which capitalism prevails, coincides with the peak of literary realistic creativity and the rise of literary naturalism. It would not be surprising, therefore, to see that the authors selected here devote considerable space to the depiction of the city's aspects. Thus, Chicago, New York, St Paul, Washington, Lagos, Johannesburg, New Illmorog, Ruwa-ini and Nairobi are typical industrial, consumerist urban centres. In the present chapter, the city, which replaces the countryside in the modern twentieth century African and American historical scene, will be analysed with everything it implies, that is, its whole atmosphere characterised by corruption and excessive consumerism, its attractive yet luring objects and places, as well as its highly materialistic people.

But is the metropolis a blessing or a woeful place, according to the authors? Is it a place of virtue or vice? In fact, it is an environment where there is a constant oscillation between good and evil, a vicious circle of success and failure, of light and

darkness. In the end, however, the characters will have to decide whether to compose with urban realities, or else leave the city, to avoid being trapped and caught in its tentacles. In the section of this chapter entitled 'Voice(s) of the City: The Lure of the Mermaids', the focus is on the 'magnet' attraction exerted by the city. But this attraction is deceptive, mainly due to the illusory effect of its 'tools of seduction' including lights, sounds, public places, shops and objects. Since urbanisation has reached the most remote corners of the countryside, the 'urban frontier' emerges as the 'land of all wonders.' Its means of 'seduction' include lights, public places and interiors, and all the objects one desires to possess, which, in pleading whispers, ask for the warm grasp of every consumer who passes by, longing for their beauty. This will bring us in the second section to explore the direct effects of capitalism on society (and the individual) with a focus on one of the most important symbols of the city in naturalist writings: the jungle. Based on Darwin's evolutionary theory, the 'urban jungle' is depicted in the novels under study as an environment where the individual's life is *determined* by biological (internal) and social (external) factors. In the struggle of men with natural forces, it is only the fittest who survive amidst the 'rottenness' –an irony stressed by most naturalist writers when dealing with the city. The rocking-chair, embodying the drifting of individuals, and the weather constitute two 'bare bones' of the urban jungle image.[1] Finally, the last section will analyse the need to return to the countryside (and Nature) after an experience in the city, either out of disillusionment with urban realities, nostalgia for a past spent in the small town, or simply deliberate decisions following a maturing process after a dissatisfactory urban experience. In

[1]The concepts image, metaphor and symbol are nuanced, but I will use them interchangeably because it is not necessary to distinguish these concepts here. For definitions of these concepts, see *Novels for Students* vol.4, Marie Rose Napierkowski (ed.), Detroit, MI: Gale, 1998. ("The Glossary"), pp. 371-381.

other words, this section will deal with the reverse movement to the one seen in chapter two, section three ('The Waste Land: The Pastoral as "Ashland"'), whereby people flee the province to go to the metropolis.

A- Voice(s) of the City: The Lure of the Mermaids

The metaphor implied by the title, namely that the city has a *real* and *great* power of attraction on humans, comes from an important text of American naturalistic fiction, Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*. The text is perhaps not exactly representative of the way cities are depicted in the whole body of American naturalistic fiction. It would not be typical of that because it conveys an unusually complex and ambivalent discourse about the city, in contrast to Dreiser's later works and mainstream American naturalistic writings that came before and after *Sister Carrie.* Indeed, in mainstream American naturalistic fiction, the urban environment emerges generally as an 'evil' setting of which the individual is a victim. This is also the case in *Sister Carrie* to some extent. After all, it can be argued, for example, that Carrie's experience in Chicago is closer to being a tragic one than to being one that is really complex: the city, to say the least, does not treat her well, at least at the beginning of the novel. In the end, it leaves her with a taste of dissatisfaction, a lack which she relates to the things Bob Ames told her upon their dinner at Sherry's with

the Vances, namely that she needed to experience another approach to life, apart from the material necessities of the world she was living in.[2]

This is the reading which William Wyler, an eminent film director interested in Dreiser, makes of Carrie's story in his 1952 adaptation of the novel.[3] Nevertheless, such readings do not seem very accurate because they disregard important details which make Dreiser's point of view more complex and more *ambiguous* than just that. In other words, they do not take into account the complexity of novelistic discourse. According to Mikhail Bakhtin, it is the ambiguity, or, in his own words, the 'self-critical' nature, of novelistic discourse and its non-conformism, as compared to its predecessors and contemporary counterparts that make a novel genuine, interesting and, therefore, worth studying from a literary standpoint.[4] For example, Dreiser's Carrie's long meditations on her rocking-chair following her 'successes' in the city – which can indicate that those 'successes' are relatively satisfactory– have been omitted in Wyler's movie. But as we shall see subsequently, even a text with such a particular complexity and ambiguity of discourse conveys the idea, central to this chapter, that cities *do* have *voices* with luring forces of attraction, ones that are comparable to the voices of Homer's mermaids, which are, at the same time, enchanting and paralysing.[5] What is more, as we shall equally see, Dreiser's first novel can also be considered as

[2]This feeling of lack can be found in the closing paragraph of the novel's much edited Doubleday & Page 1900 version, in which Carrie engages in a kind of musing, on her rocking-chair, facing the window. The ending of the original and unabridged 1981 Pennsylvania edition of the novel, based on the author's personal notes, focuses on the last moments in the life of Hurstwood, when he turns on gas and stenches himself to sleep.
[3]Just like Dreiser, however, when he first published *Sister Carrie* in 1900, Wyler was subject to censorship by the House Committee on Un-American Activities because of what they considered as his leftist views –which reflects an attempt at being faithful to Dreiser's own leftist message in his novel– in the 1952 *Carrie*. For more details, see Stephen C. Brennan, '*Sister Carrie* Becomes *Carrie*', in R. Barton Palmer (ed.), *Nineteenth Century American Fiction on Screen*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.188.
[4]See Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* and *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*.
[5]The metaphor of city objects or places with luring voices, deriving from the experience of Ulysses' fight against the tempting Sirens in the *Odyssey*, refers here to all that is tempting yet deceiving, in the metropolis.

referential in matters of the representation of the city in American naturalist literature with regards to details, not just generalities –such as those stated above. For instance, elements which American naturalist writers often depict as inherent in the concept of the metropolis, such as its 'urban jungle' aspect, are also found in *Sister Carrie*. Among Chicago's and New York's 'jungle' features is Carrie's and Hurstwood's long, tiresome, and fruitless job hunt. The use of symbolism in this novel is another case in point. Symbolism is, in fact, part and parcel of the American naturalist writers' style, and very specific symbols are recurrent in and central to it. This concerns three particular symbols, namely lights, public places and interiors, and the jungle. These symbols in particular are extremely important in *Sister Carrie* but in this section, light will be cast on the first two, the third being the focus of the section that follows, which will be devoted to the jungle aspect of the city.

Dreiser's later works (*Jenny Gerhardt*, *An American Tragedy*, and his Cowperwood trilogy, to name but a few) seem less ambiguous and present conceptions of the city that conform to mainstream American naturalistic fiction. They all depict the city as it is found in other referential works of American naturalism that came before and after Dreiser, works such as Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) and Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906). From this point of view, Dreiser's work can be studied as a typical example of the way cities are depicted in the whole body of American naturalistic fiction. And the metaphor in his title ('The Magnet Attracting: A Waif Amid Forces,' Chapter I, *Sister Carrie*)[6] does exemplify from this

[6]This title can be found in the first but heavily censored edition of *Sister Carrie*, published by Doubleday and Page in 1900 and reprinted by Harper and Row, Publishers in New York, in 1958 and 1965. p.3. The original version of Dreiser (the 1981 Pennsylvania restored edition) does not contain chapter titles.

perspective the image and the idea of the city as it comes out of this mode of writing in America.

As stated earlier on, in terms of the topic keywords, the corpus under study can clearly be divided into two broad categories: novels of the countryside and novels of the city (*Cry, the Beloved Country*, *Petals of Blood*, *Main Street*), and novels of the city (*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, *The Jungle*, *Sister Carrie*, *No Longer at Ease*, and *Jagua Nana*, though, in the latter, there are many instances of the country-city parallel). The significant place devoted to the city by the selected authors is justified by the logical historical change in the environment, in the second half of the nineteenth-century and the twentieth-century, both in America and Africa:

> As the historian Richard Hofstadter famously observed in 1955, "The United States was born in the country and has moved to the city." Over the last hundred years, U.S. life has been shaped by cities, which have given direction to the economy, politics, and culture of the United States. The rapid urbanization of U.S. society had already begun in the late nineteenth century, as immigrants to the United States swelled urban populations and rural citizens also began migrating to the cities. By 1920, the urban population of the United States exceeded the rural population.[7]

It is important to note here that the literary interest in the city can be traced back to the Hebrew civilisation, the Egyptian civilisation and the antiquity (Greco-Roman period) according to the different records either on tablets or parchments recounting the life of people in ancient cities. Recent world fiction also abounds in urban settings (either

[7] Richard Hofstadter quoted in *American Literature*, 'Life in the City,' Glencoe, p.860. 2009.

physical –tangible– or imaginary: science fiction, fantastic, utopian, or dystopian). The city has thus always fascinated authors and its place in world literatures has always been present, though the signification of this presence has changed over time. It is not less similar when speaking about the city in the context of the novels being studied here. Nineteenth-century European literatures devote considerable space to the emerging metropolis and, since the century's literary currents were realism and naturalism, the tendency of the authors then was to particularly stress the cunning side of the urban milieu:

> La ville, qui commence alors à se développer et à devenir tentaculaire, prend une place importante dans le roman du xixe siècle. Rouen, est évoqué par Flaubert dans *Madame Bovary,* Paris l'est dans *L'Éducation sentimentale* et dans de nombreux romans de Balzac et de Zola. On peut plus particulièrement rapprocher le conte *La Nuit* du *Ventre de Paris* de Zola, qui contient une description des Halles tout à fait différente, et d'Un *Amour de Swann* de Proust, où le narrateur à la recherche d'Odette à travers les rues de Paris rappelle les déambulations du narrateur.[8]

The second half of the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century city, as depicted by Russian, English and French realists and naturalists (the most noteworthy of whom are Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Dickens, Balzac, Flaubert, Maupassant, Huysmans and Zola), is a place of paradoxes. It is the setting of flagrant contrasts, extreme situations, and unimaginable possibilities. It is seen by some as a place of virtue –according to the 'modern' standards and meaning of the word 'virtue'– and a place of all vices by

[8]Guy de Maupassant. *Le Horla et Autres Contes Fantastiques*. Paris : Hachette Education- Classiques Hachette N°48, 01-01-2000. (Bernard Père et Clam). p.220.

others. It is a 'Celestial City'[9] for some who have urban dreams of success (ironically, not dreams of spirituality), an 'Emerald City' with its promising –yet blinding– green glow reminding of dollar bills.[10] It is though a 'City of Destruction'[11] for many others, a desolate place, disappointing new comers and luring them into a larger pitiless world.

Just like the countryside and the train, the city is a multidimensional symbol with various facets, all meant to exercise a mighty attraction on new comers. It tempts its visitors using all its charms and its many voices. It has different faces and places. Objects, people, interiors, department stores, shops, hotels, bars and saloons, restaurants, theatres, and public gardens –to name but a few– are all part of the array of its attraction tools drawing city guests straight to the den. It is a city of lights and delights on cold nights, but it is also a city of leisure and pleasure, of attire and desire, of fame but no shame. Yet, it is a setting for paradoxes, the most obvious ones being its virtues and vices. It is a place of angels and monsters, divinities and demons, wishes and disillusions, impossible dreams and possible nightmares. With its masks and veiled vices, it is the incarnation of 'metallic' hopes, of both the ideal and the real.

The symbolic dimension of the city is key here to understand the selected authors' view of the metropolis. Its charming voices that lure people to its various vices have thus a fatal impact on their life, due to the array of attractive tools at hand: its places and its objects which seem, for new city visitors, to be part of its virtues. By

[9]Reference is made here to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) and the journey of his main character, Christian, from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, where he would ultimately win God's salvation and redemption from his sins.
[10]Reference is made here to Lyman Frank Baum's Emerald City mentioned in his *Land of Oz* books (including *The Emerald City of Oz* (1910) and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900)) and which is Dorothy's destination after her long journey away from her native Kansas.
[11]John Bunyan. *Op.cit*.

city places, one means settings where social gatherings take place, as well as accommodation and leisure spots. This is very often referred to by Dreiser in *SC* as the 'lighted chamber', or the 'lamp', attracting and luring 'moths'. The metaphor of the 'lamp moths' will be dealt with in the second section of the present chapter. These enlightened interiors, which are more attractive and deceptive at night, include luxurious houses where parties are given, restaurants, hotels, theatres, bars, saloons, and prostitution houses.

It is equally essential to closely examine the imagery related to the city when considering its potential power over individuals. Indeed, among the most noteworthy images directly related to the metropolis are its representation as a giant magnet, its portrayal as a daringly seducing woman, its parallel with a gigantic spider with its luring web, and its depiction as a predator (an octopus with its tentacles). The city is, therefore, all at once, an object, a person, and an animal, all of which are attractive yet deceptive and illusory to the new comer.

To be able to fully see how the metropolis was perceived by the characters of the novels under study, it is interesting to consider the authors' own perception of the cities they went to and later chose as settings for their selected novels. Actually, it is necessary to draw a bridge between the present study's selected writers and French realists and naturalists in terms of how an author's view of the city is reflected in their depiction of their key characters, and sometimes, their secondary characters. Indeed, Rouen and Paris were respectively for Flaubert, Maupassant and Zola what they were for Emma Bovary, Mathilde Loisel, Thérèse Raquin and many protagonists in the Rougon-Macquart cycle.

Likewise, Chicago, New York and Washington D.C. were for Dreiser, Crane, and Lewis what they were for Carrie, Maggie, and Carol. The exception is made here for Sinclair as he was the son of the city. Sinclair portrays Chicago as the Eldorado for Jurgis and his folks, their new haven where they would concretise their 'American' dream after leaving their farming past life in Lithuania. Their dreams of well-being soon evaporate as they realise, right from the beginning (in the novel's early chapters), that this Prairie metropolis will be the graveyard of all that is dear to them: their values, their belongings, their relatives, and their life.

In parallel, the African city is seen by Achebe, Ekwensi, Paton and Ngugi as a place where one cannot prosper because it is plagued with injustices and corruption on the one hand, and infested with the residual colonial tradition and its neo-colonial by-products, on the other hand. Accordingly, these authors view Lagos, Johannesburg, and Nairobi in the same way their protagonists do –Obi, Jagua (at least, in the end), Stephen Kumalo and the four Ilmorog heroes. In short, all these cities were, at first, wonders to the provincials who moved there, before turning out to be nightmarish after their urban experience.

In his preface to Zola's prominent novel of Paris, *The Kill* (published as *La Curée*, 1871), the writer's most notable critic, Henri Mitterand, sums up the essence of what Paris stood for in terms of symbols, allowing us to safely conclude that it effectively epitomises the naturalist city as a whole:

> (p.9)La ville est fluide et changeante comme le fleuve
> qui (p.10) la traverse et la marque de son signe: l'eau.

> Comme aussi le feu qui illumine les rues neuves, transforme les becs de gaz en pièces de vingt francs sous les yeux gourmands de Saccard, fait flamber les passions, consume les êtres imprudents ou fragiles, brûle les fortunes dans un "feu de joie colossal". Ailleurs, les rues de Paris font songer aux membres ou aux entrailles d'un monstre. (…) Zola est à sa façon un "paysan de Paris", qui trace dans la grande ville les sillons de l'imaginaire. Les figures se superposent et se substituent les unes aux autres, faisant du Paris de *La Curée*, comme dans la tradition romantique de Balzac et de Hugo, mais comme aussi dans le surréalisme d'Aragon, un univers multiforme, à la fois matière en mouvement et personne vivante (…).[12]

In other words, we are given here the different facets of Paris and the set of imagery and symbols that we have mentioned earlier on in this section. Two opposing faces are displayed in this passage: Paris as a city of lights, delights and nightly pleasures; and Paris as an urban jungle, a monster. While its dwellers are compared to the 'moths of the flame', Paris is personified into a woman. Zola's depiction of Paris can thus be the starting point of the examination of the ways in which the realist and naturalist city is described by our selected writers. The similarities in such descriptions of the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century urban milieu are, indeed, striking.

Chicago and New York, in *Maggie*, *SC*, and *TJ*, are painted as a realm, a magical realm. In these city novels, the two metropolises are coveted because they offer opportunities for everyone with an urban dream:

[12]Henri Mitterand, 'Préface' (pp.5-14.), in Emile Zola, *La Curée*. Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1996 (1871). pp.9-11.

> In 1889 Chicago had the peculiar qualifications of growth which made such adventuresome pilgrimages, even on the part of young girls, plausible.(15) Its many and growing commercial opportunities gave it wide-spread fame which made of it a giant magnet, drawing to itself from all quarters the hopeful and the hopeless—those who had their fortunes yet to make and those whose fortunes and affairs had reached a disastrous climax elsewhere. It was a city of over 500,000, with the ambition, the daring, the activity of a metropolis of a million.[13]

Dreiser's minute descriptions of Chicago in the opening chapters of his novel reveal important historical changes in the nation at that time. The process of urbanisation promised employment to the fast-growing number of people fleeing their province. Chicago, this 'giant magnet' of the Prairie, was brimming with vitality to the point that it could compete with big cities like New York. The author, employing the journalistic style of a reporter and putting on the historian's cap, carefully depicts and explains the details of the blooming industrial sector in the busy streets of the city. Chicago was, at that time, the hearth of capitalist investment and commercial development:

> Its streets and houses were already scattered over an area of seventy-five square miles. Its population was not so much thriving upon established commerce as upon the industries which prepared for the arrival of others. The sound of the hammer engaged upon the erection of new structures was everywhere heard. Great industries were moving in. The huge railroad corporations which had long before recognized the prospects of the place had seized upon vast tracts of land for transfer and shipping purposes. Streetcar lines had been extended far out into the open country in anticipation of rapid growth. The city had laid

[13]Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*. Pennsylvania, 1981. Chapter 2, pp.15-6.

> miles and miles of streets and sewers through regions where perhaps one solitary house stood out alone—a pioneer of the populous ways to be. There were regions, open to the sweeping winds and rain, which were yet lighted throughout the night with long, blinking lines of gas lamps fluttering in the wind. Narrow board walks extended out, passing here a house and there a store at far intervals, eventually ending on the open prairie.(p.16)[14]

This pilgrimage of the 'hopeful and hopeless', the fortunate and desperate, has been experienced by the author himself when, as a teen, he first encountered the city and was introduced to its marvels. Chicago and New York represented for him then a land of possible dreams, just as they incarnated a terrestrial Eden for Carrie. His longings for city places and objects are Carrie's and both could hardly disengage themselves from the metropolis's firm grip, for who can challenge the pull of a 'giant magnet'?

In his two autobiographical works, *A Book About Myself* (1922) and *The Colour of a Great City* (1923), Dreiser's descriptions of Chicago and New York strikingly remind the reader of his portrayal of both cities in his first novel. His feelings are those of Carrie, and by extension, of the provincials seeking opportunities in the city at that time:

> To the child, the genius with imagination, or the wholly untraveled, the approach to a great city for the first time is a wonderful thing. Particularly if it be evening—that mystic period between the glare and the gloom of the world when life is changing from one sphere or condition to another. Ah, the promise of the night. What does it not hold for the weary. What old illusion of hope is not here forever repeated! Says

[14] Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit.*

> the soul of the toiler to itself, "I shall soon be free. I shall be in the ways and the hosts of the merry. The streets, the lamp, the lighted chamber set for dining are for me. The theatres, the halls, the parties, the ways of rest and the paths of song—these are mine in the night." Though all humanity be still enclosed in the shops, the thrill runs abroad. It is in the air. The dullest feel something which they may not always express or describe. It is the lifting of the burden of toil.[15]

His protagonist marvels at the city's various possibilities, generously offered especially at night. Her amazement precedes her encounter with the city for she is still on the train that pulled her out of her native Columbia City, Wisconsin. What helped embellish the urban space that was about to host her were the sugar-coated words of Drouet, the salesman with the fine tongue, who is amused by her wonder and her lack of city knowledge:

> Sister Carrie gazed out of the window. Her companion, affected by her wonder, so contagious are all things, felt anew some interest in the city and pointed out the marvels. Already vast net-works of tracks—the sign and insignia of Chicago—stretched on either hand. There were thousands of cars and a clangor of engine bells. At the sides of this traffic stream stood dingy houses, smoky mills, tall elevators. Through the interstices, evidences of the stretching city could be seen. Street cars waited at crossings for the train to go by. Gatemen toiled at wooden arms which closed the streets. Bells clanged, the rails clacked, whistles sounded afar off.[16]

[15]Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit.*, Chapter 1, p.10.
[16]*Idem.*

Carrie's wonder is fueled by the dynamic character of Chicago, as seen from the train window, and the lively presence of Drouet as a guide reassured her as to her country-city journey: it was a good thing to come to Chicago, the welcoming metropolis. It was, indeed, a magical realm where impossible dreams could come true, where everything and anything becomes possible. If she first thinks of the freedom the city will grant her, she then measures the material dreams and fantasies this fascinating world will help her achieve.

Dreiser's openings in his two autobiographies of the 1920s would be reflected in all his city novels. His impressions about Chicago and New York, when he was eighteen, would fill the descriptions of many of his characters' personality traits and would be transparent in the way they approach the city and handle its conditions. Actually, Dreiser's *A Book About Myself*, which is less dark than his subsequent *The Colour of a Great City*, focuses on the writer's first impressions in Chicago and his view of it:

> During the year 1890 I had been formulating my first dim notion as to what it was I wanted to do in life. For two years and more I had been reading Eugene Field's "Sharps and Flats," a column he wrote daily for the Chicago *Daily News*, and through this, the various phases of life which he suggested in a humorous though at times romantic way, I was beginning to suspect, vaguely at first, that I wanted to write, possibly something like that. Nothing else that I had so far read " novels, plays, poems, histories " gave me quite the same feeling for constructive thought as did the matter of his daily notes, poems, and aphorisms, which were of Chicago principally, whereas nearly all others dealt with foreign scenes and people.[17]

[17]Theodore Dreiser, *A Book About Myself*. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1922. chapter 1, p.1.

Dreiser gives us here a picture of him in 1890, a year after his fictional Carrie boards the train and travels to Chicago for the first time. He mentions the fact that he had read about it in the *Daily News*, just like Carrie had read about the growing department stores in the paper. He overtly admits that Eugene Field's column inspired him to write similar texts, something which he made concrete through the writing of *SC*. Again, like his first novel’s female protagonist, he marvelled at the streets, buildings and factories in Chicago:

> But this comment on local life here and now, these trenchant bits on local street scenes, institutions, characters, functions, all moved me as nothing hitherto had. To me Chicago at this time seethed with a peculiarly human or realistic atmospheres. It is given to some cities, as to some lands, to suggest romance, and to me Chicago did that hourly. It sang, I thought, and in spite of what I deemed my various troubles –small enough as I now see them– I was singing with it. (...) [T]he wonder of the western world, fascinated me.[18]

His fascination with the big Prairie metropolis extends to the megalopolis of New York but, as mentioned earlier on, the picture he gives of the New York he knew around the 1900s and that he rediscovered in the early 1920s is different in *The Colour of a Great City*. It is tainted with a touch of melancholy, a nostalgia for a highly cultural period that he could still feel in the city streets but that nobody, according to him, was feeling due, first, to a generation gap and, second, to a shift in the very cultural values that characterised turn-of-century New York:

[18]Theodore Dreiser, *Ibid.,* p.01.

> For, to begin with, the city, as I see it, was more varied and arresting and, after its fashion, poetic and even idealistic then than it is now. It offered, if I may venture the opinion, greater social and financial contrasts than it does now: the splendor of the purely social Fifth Avenue of the last decade of the last century and the first decade of this, for instance, as opposed to the purely commercial area that now bears that name; the sparklingly personality-dotted Wall Street of 1890-1910 as contrasted with the commonplace and almost bread and butter world that it is to-day.[19]

He stresses, here, the new reality of the big city: it is a busy commercial and industrial centre. A little further, in the first chapter of his 1923 autobiography, he draws a sharp contrast between the New York of his dreams and the one that was in front of him:

> It was silent, the city of my dreams, marble and serene, due perhaps to the fact that in reality I knew nothing of crowds, poverty, the winds and storms of the inadequate that blow like dust along the paths of life. It was an amazing city, so far-flung, so beautiful, so dead. There were tracks of iron stalking through the air, and streets that were as canons, and stairways that mounted in vast flights to noble plazas, and steps that led down into deep places where were, strangely enough, underworld silences. And there were parks and flowers and rivers.[20]

This fascination country people have for their urban hostess is actually labelled by Christophe Den Tandt, in *The Urban Sublime in American Literary Naturalism*, as sublimation, an extreme wonder at the hugeness of the urban milieu which one sees for

[19]Theodore Dreiser, *The Color of a Great City*, New York: Boni & Liveright, 1923. 'Foreword', p.v.
[20]Theodore Dreiser, *Ibid*., 'The City of My Dreams', p.1.

the first time. Indeed, visitors of the city are under the charm of its overall atmosphere and attire. This very charm acts like a big magnet, as if these new comers cannot help feeling dragged by the attractive force of the urban setting.

> When characters in turn-of-the-century novels discover the big city, they feel that the urban landscape outreaches their powers of perception.
> (…) [t]he spectacle of the metropolis stirs emotions of sublimity anchored in memories of overwhelming nature (…).[21]

The memories meant here may go back to as far as the childhood period, where the child's eyes are amazed by the sparkling lights and cheerful sounds of fairs and circuses for, were these places not places of world wonders in an infant's sparkling eyes? Den Tandt actually draws a parallel between the city visitors' fascination by the urban setting's overall atmosphere to that of children who experience new places with visual effects. The city 'spectacle' he describes is one that targets the emotions of the individual. There is a kind of attachment and familiarity that develops between the visitor and the generous seducing hostess.

Interesting examples of such fascination are depicted by Dreiser and Achebe through the memories of the city that both Carrie and Obi recall. However, while Obi finds the picture of Lagos City when he first sees it and when he rediscovers it upon his return from the UK incompatible with his childhood stories about it, Carrie

[21]Christophe Den Tandt. *The Urban Sublime in American Literary Naturalism*. Urbana & Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1998. Part I- Realist and Naturalist Discourses of the Urban World Chapter 1- From the Natural to the Urban Sublime, pp.02-12. p.02.

audaciously seeks any possibility to live in every street and every corner of Chicago, which nurtured her dreams and about which she had read in the local papers:

> Since infancy her ears had been full of its fame. Once the family had thought of moving there. If she secured good employment they might come now. Anyhow it was vast. There were lights and sounds and a roar of things. People were rich. There were vast depots. This on- rushing train was merely speeding to get there.[22]

Obi's stories about Lagos were related to him and his childhood friends by a soldier who was known to have travelled to many parts of the world:

> As a boy in the village of Umuofia he had heard his first stories about Lagos from a soldier home on leave from the war. (…) It was from one of these soldiers that Obi had his first picture of Lagos.
>
> "There is no darkness there," he told his admiring listeners, "because at night the electric shines like the sun, and people are always walking about, that is, those who want to walk. If you don't want to walk you only have to wave your hand and a pleasure car stops for you." His audience made sounds of wonderment. Then by way of digression he said: "If you see a white man, take off your hat for him. The only thing he cannot do is mold a human being."
>
> For many years afterwards, Lagos was always associated with (p.17) electric lights and motorcars in Obi's mind. Even after he had at last visited the city and spent a few days there before flying to the United Kingdom his views did not change very much. (p.18)[23]

---

[22] Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*. Pennsylvania, 1981. chapter 1, p.3.
[23] Chinua Achebe, *NLE,* chapter 2, pp.17-8 (PDF). Anchor books

Obi's views of Lagos as a city of lights were that of a little boy who carefully listened to descriptions coming from the mouth of a hero. He was thus sublimated by the story itself before he came to meet the heroine of the story.

It would be very interesting to compare the main characters' fascination with the city to the attitude of Flaubert's Emma Bovary, considering the fact that the latter novel served as a primary text, a firm initial literary ground, on which the authors built their own stories of their female protagonists, at least in terms of personality traits and attitude. Flaubert's minute depiction of how she feels after the ball at château Vaubyessard is striking. Her longings, which she murmurs to herself, for the city of Paris –where the distinguished people attending the ball go– translate not only a great admiration for the metropolis but also, and mainly, the sublimation that leaves a deep impact on one's soul:

> She was at Tostes; he was at Paris now, far away! What was this Paris like? What a vague name! She repeated it in a low voice, for the mere pleasure of it; it rang in her ears like a great cathedral bell; it shone before her eyes, even on the labels of her pomade-pots.
> (…) She bought a plan of Paris, and with the tip of her finger on the map she walked about the capital. She went up the boulevards, stopping at every turning, between the lines of the streets, in front of the white squares that represented the houses. At last she would close the lids of her weary eyes, and see in the darkness the gas jets flaring in the wind and the steps of carriages lowered with much noise before the peristyles of theatres.[24]

[24]Gustave Flaubert. *Madame Bovary*. Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions, 2001 (1994). Part one, Chapter 09, p.49.

The melancholy that touches upon Emma's heart is so deep that she will ultimately endure an episode of depression. She longed for Paris so much that the city was for her a remote marvel. 'Paris, more vague than the ocean, glimmered before Emma's eyes in an atmosphere of vermilion.'[25]

Carrie's view of Chicago and her fascination with it were not much different. Though both Emma and Carrie were provincials in the city (Emma moved then to the city of Rouen), Carrie's dreams seem to be more pragmatic than Emma's. Dreiser's heroine is a dreamer but not a typical idealist, even if at the end of the novel, the words of Bob Ames –impregnated with a deep philosophy of the aim of life– seemed to be gradually absorbed by her mind:

> It was so with the vast railroad yards, with the crowded array of vessels she saw at the river, and the huge factories over the way, lining the water's edge. Through the open windows she could see the figures of men and women in working aprons, moving busily about. The great streets were wall-lined mysteries to her; the vast offices, strange mazes which concerned far-off individuals of importance. She could only think of people connected with them as counting money, dressing magnificently, and riding in carriages. What they dealt in, how they laboured, to what end it all came, she had only the vaguest conception. It was all wonderful, all vast, all far removed, and she sank in spirit inwardly and fluttered feebly at the heart as she thought of entering any one of these mighty concerns and asking for something to do—something that she could do—anything.[26]

In this fast-growing metropolis, where everything is larger than life, where every single detail is great, Carrie is lost in its mazes, mysteries, and wonders. Everything is

[25]Gustave Flaubert. *Op.cit.*, p.50.
[26]Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit*., chapter 2, pp.17-8.

enticing to the eye; everything is appealing to the soul. The entire city speaks to Carrie, and calls her, arms wide-open, offering, in display, all that the soul longs for.

Ekwensi's Lagos has the stature of Chicago for the villagers and the provincials who journey to it. Strikingly enough, Jagua's longings for the city before she left her native village and her husband, are akin to Carrie's and Emma's. Just like the last two, Jagua abandons the countryside (the rural area of Ogabu) and heads for the city, which for her symbolised total freedom. Just like Carrie's dream of 'freedom' from the country boredom, Jagua also dreams of freedom from her stifling life with her cheating husband and her unbearably traditionalist in-laws:

> One day when he went to his filling station, leaving the house to her, she dressed up and walked into the streets. She was passing by the Railway Station and on a sudden impulse she went in and asked for the timetable. A young man smilingly told her when the next train would be leaving for L-A-G-O-S. Lagos! The magic name. She had heard of Lagos where the girls were glossy, worked in offices like the men, danced, smoked, wore high-heeled shoes and narrow slacks, and were 'free' and 'fast' with their favours. She heard that the people in Lagos did not have to go to bed at eight o'clock. Anyone who cared could go roaming the streets or wandering from one night spot to the other right up till morning. The night spots never shut, and they were open all night and every night; not like 'here' where at 8 p.m. (latest) everywhere was shut down and the streets deserted, so that it looked odd to be wandering about.[27]

[27]Cyprian Ekwensi, *Jagua Nana*, PDF, chapter 22, pp.167-8

Jagua's inner whisper of the 'the magic name' of Lagos reminds us much of Emma's whisper of the name of Paris that 'rang in her ears like a great cathedral bell' and 'shone before her eyes, even on the labels of her pomade-pots.'[28]

The image of the city as a place of lights and delights is much present in the urban novels under study. Chicago, New York, Washington, Lagos, Nairobi and Johannesburg all have features of a lively enlightened city, where everyone seeks to overcome their feeling of boredom and fulfil material dreams, especially at night. Indeed, adding to the image of the metropolis as a 'great maze', a 'Babel' tower, a fortress, and a magic castle, the modern city is a place of leisure and pleasure:

> Joseph had so much to tell Obi on his first night in Lagos that it was past three when they slept. He told him about the cinema and the dance halls and about political meetings.
> "Dancing is very important nowadays. No girl will look at you if you can't dance. (…)''[29]

Joseph Okeke, one of Obi's acquaintances and later friend who could adapt to city life, informs the latter on the night before his leave to the UK that dancing was one of the *sine qua non* urban codes. In order to be accepted, he needed to master dancing, one of the city's most popular delights. This implies that one must be acquainted with dance halls and other urban spots where one could perform such city 'talents.'

Joseph actually sums up, in the quote above, the essence of life in Lagos. He combines the delightful aspect of the city –cinemas, dance halls– with its serious aspect –political meetings. Achebe –just like Ekwensi– makes the link between these

[28]Gustave Flaubert. *Op.cit.*, p.49.
[29]Chinua Achebe, *NLE* chapter 2, p.18 (PDF) Anchor books.

two aspects by describing Lagos's places of delight (nightly pleasures) as places that are frequented by politicians right after their meetings. Since the political life in Lagos, as depicted by Achebe and Ekwensi, is tainted with extreme corruption, and since these places of nightly pleasures are the hearth of drinks and prostitution, one can safely label such spots as places of 'vicious delight.'

A little further in the novel, Achebe draws a flagrant contrast between Lagos City and the suburban region of Ikoyi, where Obi lives. The contrast is so sharp that one has the impression of moving from life to death:

> Going from the Lagos mainland to Ikoyi on a Saturday night was like going from a bazaar to a funeral. And the vast Lagos cemetery which separated the two places helped to deepen this feeling. For all its luxurious bungalows and flats and its extensive greenery, Ikoyi was like a graveyard. It had no corporate life—at any rate for those Africans who lived there. They had not always lived there, of course. It was once a European reserve. But things had changed, and some Africans in "European posts" had been given houses in Ikoyi. Obi Okonkwo, for example lived there, and as he drove from Lagos to his flat he was struck again by these two cities in one. It always reminded him of twin kernels separated by a thin wall in a palm-nut shell. Sometimes one kernel was shiny black and alive, the other powdery white and dead.[30]

Together with the idea of places of delight and pleasure is the idea of the 'lighted chamber', a phrase coined by Dreiser and mentioned several times in *SC*. This chamber of light has a magnet attraction for people who go to the city. In Dreiser's *SC*,

[30] Chinua Achebe, *NLE*, chapter 2, p.21 (PDF) Anchor books.

just like in Ekwensi's *JN*, these people are drawn, perhaps unconsciously, to such lighted spots where pleasures were sold and where they can afford leisure time which provided them with artificial and ephemeral happiness. The lighted chamber that the author refers to includes bars, saloons, restaurants, and comfortable hotels. The two places which hook particular interest in Dreiser's novel are Hannah and Hogg's saloon managed by Hurstwood, in Chicago, and Sherry's, the luxurious restaurant in New York, to which Carrie goes with the Vances:

> The many friends he met here dropped in because they craved, without perhaps consciously analyzing it, the company, the glow, the atmosphere, which they found. (…) No evil could come out of the contemplation of an expensively decorated chamber. The worst effect such a thing could have would be perhaps to stir up in the material-minded an ambition to arrange their lives upon a similarly splendid basis. In the last analysis, that would scarcely be called the fault of the decorations, but rather of the innate trend of the mind. That such a scene might stir the less expensively dressed to emulate the more expensively dressed could scarcely be laid at the door of anything save the false ambition of the minds of those so affected. Remove the element so thoroughly and solely complained of, liquor, and there would not be one to gainsay the qualities of beauty and enthusiasm which would remain. The pleased eye with which our modern restaurants of fashion are looked upon is proof positive of this assertion.[31]

The lighted chamber is portrayed as very enticing. Its decorations play actually a big part in its appeal to its visitors. These very decorations move the visitors to the extent of fuelling their material desires for financial prosperity. They are sublimated by the lights, the colours and the sounds which lure them into believing they can make their

[31]Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*. Pennsylvania 1981. chapter 05, p.47.

worldly dreams come true. Such decorations were carefully designed and chosen to attract individuals; most importantly, their cost is quite significant. Yet Dreiser puts forward here the suggestion that these decorations did only trigger people's materialistic greed and ambitions; they are dragged unconsciously to the place because of their innate materialist penchant. They are predisposed to be pulled by such places simply because this is part of the whole determinist process with which the urban environment works.

Another effect of the lighted chamber on the individual is the urge that it raises in the latter to 'emulate' those in a better financial status. The word, very often used in Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, refers here to the imitation impulse provoked by a sublimating scene, mainly a financially sublimating scene. In the materialists' world, emulation brings self-satisfaction and joy. Liquor is another tool in the lighted chamber's paraphernalia of luring objects. It fosters the illusory aspect of lights and sounds –giving the place and its visitors more charm– and awakens the senses of the individual. Here again, Dreiser says that liquor is not the culprit for people's fascination by the place; what is implied here is that it is a matter of genetic programming to have a tendency for going after "all that glitters":

> Yet here is the fact of the lighted chamber; the dressy, greedy company; the small, self interested palaver; the disorganized, aimless, wandering mental action which it represents—the love of light and show and finery which, to one outside, under the serene light of the eternal stars, must seem a strange and shiny thing. Under the stars and sweeping night winds, what a lamp-flower it must bloom—a strange, glittering night

> flower, odour-yielding, insect-drawing, insect-infested rose of pleasure.[32]

The author compares here the lighted chamber to a gigantic flower pulling towards its nectar a swarm of insects. People are thus instinct-driven; they go to the 'rose of pleasure' in search of temporary physical joys. In many parts of the novel where the writer devotes passages to his philosophy of life as a naturalist, the reader is given the idea that these people in the city lack intellectual maturity and knowledge.

Ekwensi's Tropicana is equivalent to Dreiser's Hannah and Hogg's saloon, in Chicago, of which Hurstwood is the manager:

> The *Tropicana* to her was a daily drug, a potent, habit-forming brew. Like all the other women who came here, alone or with some man, Jagua was looking for the ray of hope. Something will happen tonight, this night, she always told herself.
>
> The music was tremendously rhythmic, coming from the bongo drums, and the bandleader, pointing his trumpet skywards blew till the blisters on his lips widened and he wiped his lips, and the sax snatched away the solo, distorting it. This was it, Jagua felt.[33]

For Jagua, the Tropicana Club had the effect of liquor itself so much its illusory power on her was strong.

In the naturalistic context of Zola's works and that of the selected American and African authors, liquor (or alcoholic drinks, in general) is part of the luring elements of the lighted urban spots. It is, actually so hallucinating that it literally hammers the

[32]Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit*.
[33]Cyprian Ekwensi, *Jagua Nana*, PDF, chapter 3, p.13

minds of the drunkards. Zola's *L'Assommoir* (*The Drinking Den*) takes its name from Old Colombe's drinking den –or saloon– whose gin fountain generously waters its visitors, who go there to drown their everyday life miseries:

> Old Colombe's drinking den was on the corner of the Rue des Poissonniers and the Boulevard de Rochechouart. The sign outside bore only one word, in long blue letters that extended from one end to the other: DISTILLERY. Beside the door, in two halves of a brandy cask, were some dusty oleanders. The huge counter, with its rows of glasses, its water fountain and its pewter measuring cups, lay to the left as one came in; and all around it, the vast drinking-hall was decorated with large casks, painted light yellow and glistening with varnish, their copper hoops and taps shining. Higher up, on shelves, bottles of liqueur, jars of fruit and all kinds of neatly ranged flasks hid the walls and reflected their bright splashes of apple green, pale gold and mauve back from the mirror behind the counter. But the most unusual feature of the establishment, in a yard at the back of the saloon, behind an oak fence and glass windows, was the still itself, which the customers could see at work: long-necked retorts and coils disappearing underground – a devil's kitchen for workmen to come and gaze at in an alcoholic stupor.[34]

It is thus a Paris of alcoholic rêveries which is epitomised in Old Colombe's bar. Its carefully chosen decorations and colours are all meant to pull drink consumers to the place. We can easily relate this drinking place with Crane's descriptions of bars and saloons in *Maggie*, Dreiser's descriptions of bars and saloons in *Sister Carrie*, Sinclair's descriptions of saloons in *TJ,* Ekwensi's descriptions of the Tropicana Club in *JN*, Ngugi's descriptions of bars in *PB*, and Paton's descriptions of liquor-making in

---

[34]Emile Zola, *The Drinking Den*, Trans. Robin Buss, London: Penguin, 2000 (2003) chapter 2, pp.95-96. PDF. (Originally published as *L'Assommoir* (*The Dram Shop*), 1877.)

CBC's Johannesburg. Liquor is present in the whole body of the corpus and it serves the same illusory and deceitful function. It is as cunning as the city's other vices.

Both Ekwensi and Dreiser attribute a particularity to the lighted chamber: the spirit of high-life. At the Tropicana, people (like Uncle Taiwo) wanted to hear High-life music and the jazz of Jimo Ladi. On the other hand, Hannah and Hogg's for Drouet 'represented in part high life—a fair sample of what the whole must be,'[35] while, in the case of Carrie, 'the glamour of the high life of the city had, in the few experiences afforded her by the former (the Vances), seized her completely.'[36]

Consumerism is part and parcel of the description of the metropolis in city novels. In *The Country and the City*, in which Raymond Williams examines features of the country and the city and their people, consumption in the modern city is normalised. Due to the modern way of life, the goods and the commodities offered by urban settings, consumerism becomes itself a way of life of modern people, a necessity. However, if this can be considered as a norm in present time, it was not the case in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century when cities, despite reaching a considerable state of development, were not yet megalopolises. Totally industrial capitalist cities are not very old in time. That is to say, the context of the concerned novels is a transitory context between old or traditional values and modern values; in other words, excesses in everything were somewhat shocking because they went against the conventional social codes preceding the stunning financial capitalist bloom.

[35]Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit.*, chapter 05, p.42.
[36]Theodore Dreiser, *Ibid.,* chapter 37, p.346.

In the context of the selected novels, the urban environment favours such consumerist attitudes whereby everything, literally everything, was subject to sale and purchase. People were characterised thus by fierce and massive consumerism, ostentation, emulation, 'conspicuous consumption', and 'conspicuous leisure' (terms coined by T. Veblen). Depicted as instinct-driven with rapacity, fierce rivalry, greed, and insatiable appetites, city people feel the urge to constantly buy things as a prerequisite of well-being and identity validation.

To address this urban attitude in the selected novels of the corpus, it is necessary to mention Emma Bovary as the most popular consumer in realistic and naturalistic fiction. Flaubert's *Madame Bovary, Provincial Manners* is related to orientalism and exoticism. Her thirst for and addiction to consumption, that is, buying items even if she does not really need them, are unconsciously meant to overcome her deep feeling of boredom /ennui. Her aim is more to fill in mental and spiritual gaps than attending to any specific requirements. Ironically, whenever she feels the need for something that is material, or feels that something is lacking in her life, or simply obsesses her over something she thinks will make her happy, she has nostalgia for the convent, for her teenage period when she used to indulge in daydreaming. Instead of representing a temple of spirituality, the convent represents for Emma a gateway to her imagination, which she used to fuel with her extensive readings of romantic books. Another reason why Emma spends lavishly is the need for emulation. She is a provincial who needs to act like a city dweller, or rather to become one. For her, buying is essential to move from the state of the provincial to the state of the city dweller, to adopt city manners and get rid of country ones.

Last but not least, Madame Bovary purchases items to acquire feelings through the objects of her desires. These objects are humanized, personified; they have emotions and feelings and they have a voice. These objects of desire and fantasy, for which Emma yearns all through the novel and which she craves to possess, become in her eyes living creatures; they take life and console her, though temporarily, in her chronic state of boredom. Ironically again, these spendings, standing for her provisional dreams and helping her quench the thirst of her innumerable passions drown her and her husband in tragic debts and precipitate drastically the fatal fall of her household. Passages describing the items Emma buys abound in the novel and Flaubert insists in each one that Emma does not need and rather fills gaps in her mental and psychological situation. The objects she buys at the antiquary, the furniture (like the pen and writing table that she does not use), the clothes and items she gets on debts from greedy shopkeepers such as M. L'Heureux (including items with 'oriental' touch like the scarves from Algeria) lose their value in her eyes as soon as she puts them in the house.

Zola's novels also contain instances of extravagant spendings and consumption. Gervaise in *L'Assommoir* (*The Drinking Den*), Thérèse in *Thérèse* Raquin, the women who shop at *Au Bonheur des Dames* (*The Ladies' Paradise*) and the people going to les Halles, the big food market of Les Halles at the heart of Paris, in *Le Ventre de Paris* (*The Belly of Paris*) indulge in such frenetic consumption habits. Food is one of the elements that attract buyers in the city. The process of buying food and that of consuming it are painted by Zola, just like many other naturalist contemporaries, as

excessive. They remind us much of François Rabelais' grotesque world of *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*, marked by excesses of all sorts, especially in food consumption:

> And now that he was back in Paris, he found it fat and sleek, overflowing with food. He had returned on a bed of vegetables, riding into the city on a wave of good things to eat which he had felt swarming around him, spreading everywhere and making him feel uneasy. That carnival night seemed to have lasted for seven years. Once again he saw the bright lights on the boulevards, the laughing women, the greedy city he had left on that distant January night; and it all seemed to have grown so much bigger, to match the gigantic size of Les Halles, whose heavy breathing—the result of the excesses of the day before—he could now hear.[37]

A little further, the author adds details about Les Halles market, which gives life to the whole city of Paris, especially at night:

> The gates of the market where ordinary vegetables were sold had just been opened, and the retailers who had stalls there, wearing white bonnets and scarves knotted over their black calico jackets, their skirts pinned up to stop them getting dirty, were sorting out their stock for the day, depositing their purchases in huge porters' baskets spaced out on the ground. The coming and going between the roadway and the market grew more intense as people collided and cursed, while all around there was a clamour of voices growing hoarse because of prolonged wrangling over a sou or two.[38]

[37]Emile Zola, *The Belly of Paris*, Brian Nelson (trans.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007 -*Le Ventre de Paris*, 1874). p.12
[38]Emile Zola, *Ibid*., p.14

Gervaise in *L'Assommoir* does not hesitate to spend lavishly –and irrationally– as soon as there is money, which illustrates her conspicuous consumption in the city:

> Gervaise's Saint's-day fell on the 19th of June. On feast-days in the Coupeau household they had a slap-up meal, a huge banquet from which they came away stuffed to bursting, their bellies full for a week afterwards. There was a general clear-out of small change. As soon as the couple had four *sous*, they gobbled them up, they invented saints on the calendar, to have an excuse for a treat.
> That year, they started talking about the celebrations a month in advance. They tried to decide what to eat and licked their lips over it.[39]

Actually, Zola's *Drinking Den* can be considered as a good reference in terms of consumerism, mainly ostentatious consumerism, and excessive spending. The entirety of chapter seven is about the feast Gervaise holds, the copious meal, and the goose. There is an ironic focus on the goose when describing the 'Gargantuesque' meal, as if it were an important personality, a person of renown invited at the table and deserving due respect from the attendees. A much more significant irony lies in the parallel Zola makes between Gervaise and her goose. Indeed, light is cast on the goose (an animal which is personified and respected), while Gervaise (that others call Tip-Tap –Ban-Ban in the original French novel– because of her leg handicap), has grown fat because of her 'love for food', has now seen her handicapped leg fatten and shorten, and will eventually walk like a duck or a goose a little further in the novel. In other words, while animals are personified, people are animalised:

[39]Emile Zola, *The Drinking Den*, chapter 7, pp.330-331.

> There was a triumphal re-entry, Gervaise carrying the goose, with stiffly outstretched arms, her face sweating, but beaming in a great, silent grin. (...) And when at last the goose was on the table, huge, golden brown, pouring with fat, they didn't set about it straight away. There was a moment of astonishment, of respectful surprise, that left them all speechless. They pointed the creature out to one another with winks and nods: hell and damnation! What a girl! Look at those thighs, that belly! (…)
> So then they started to analyse the creature in detail. Gervaise gave them the facts: it was the finest bird she could find at the poulterer's on the Faubourg Poissonnière; it weighed twelve and a half pounds on the coal merchant's scale; they had used the same amount – a whole bushel – of coal to cook her; and she had given up three bowls of fat. Virginie interrupted to boast that she had seen the bird raw: you could have eaten her like that, her flesh was so pure and white, with a skin like a blonde, huh? All the men laughed with ribald greed.[40]

This illustrates how nineteenth-century individuals are portrayed in Naturalistic fiction: they are instinct-based creatures. It is, indeed, one of the key features of the characters found not only in European Naturalistic novels but also in American and African Naturalistic fiction. Interestingly enough, one can make the link with Flaubert's description of the meal at Château Vaubyessard (the prestigious ball that Emma attends) in *MB*, Maupassant's description of the meal at the Minister's reception ceremony in 'The Necklace' (the outstanding event which Mathilde is invited to attend) and Dreiser's description of the meal at the luxurious Sherry's, (the prominent and elegant restaurant, in Fifth Avenue, New York, to which Carrie is invited for dinner by the Vances) in *SC*. The ostentatious decoration of the restaurant room, the 'vast array' of the dishes displayed on the menu, and the bill are so

[40]Emile Zola, *The Drinking Den*, chapter 7, pp.356-357.

extravagant that they shock Mrs. Vance's cousin, Bob Ames, who functions in the novels as the conscience of Man:

> The large bill-o-fare held an array of dishes sufficient to feed an army, sidelined with prices which made reasonable expenditure a ridiculous impossibility. An order of soup at fifty cents or a dollar, with a dozen kinds to choose from. Oysters in forty styles and at sixty cents the half-dozen. Entrées, fish and meats at prices which would house one overnight in an average hotel. A dollar fifty and two dollars seemed to be the most common figures upon this most tastefully printed bill-o-fare.[41]

It is important to add that the events aforementioned, which Emma, Mathilde, and Carrie attend, are decisive events in the life of the heroines. Indeed, each female protagonist experiences a 'gap' in her life following the event –perhaps to a lesser extent Mathilde Loisel due to the sudden loss of her friend's necklace, at night, after the reception. These notable high society gatherings leave deep marks in the very soul of the women who attend them because of the various longings for the material world each one has and the dreadfully miserable inability to reach it in the immediate future.

Equally important, and relevant to the theme of consumerism, is the notion of ostentation, i.e. 'to see and to be seen' in the city. 'Parading' in the streets of Chicago, New York and Lagos is described by the writers as part of identity affirmation. Displaying one's attire to attract 'consumer' eyes is of the utmost importance in the consumer world, and the city is the place where a status can ideally be observed. Here again, a link can be made with Flaubert's Rouen and Zola's Paris. All of Emma,

[41]Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit.,*chapter 35, p.332.

Mathilde, and Gervaise seem to have their imprint on Jagua, and Carrie in terms of conspicuous consumption as a means of identity validation, but this time, the products to be consumed are people:

> She had no fine dresses, no jewellery, nothing. And that was all she cared about; she felt that God had made her for such things. She would have given anything to be popular, envied, attractive, and in demand.[42]

This attitude, labelled the 'conspicuous consumption' of goods, is summed up by T. Veblen's passage from his *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) in which he states that **'**The basis on which good repute in any highly organized industrial community ultimately rests is pecuniary strength; and the means of showing pecuniary strength, and so of gaining or retaining a good name, are leisure and a conspicuous consumption of goods.'[43]

If the city streets are gigantic windows of display fostering the consumerist impulses of city dwellers, shop windows also encourage consumerism, and house windows offer city dwellers a view of the 'luring' inner and outer urban spectacle, the visual artefacts of which are most generally unknown to the beholder. The latter endlessly seeks beauty, especially in city objects. Actually, objects and their acquisition are sine qua non conditions of life in the city for the sake of social status. This attitude towards material objects results from a shift of cultural and human values leading to a shift in emotions (emotions related to the acquisition of the 'object of

---

[42]Guy de Maupassant, 'The Necklace', *A Day in the Country and Other Stories*, David Coward Trans. (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. pp.269-281.). p.270.

[43]Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, (1899), chapter 4: 'Conspicuous Consumption', in <http://www.fullbooks.com/The-Theory-of-the-Laisure-Class.html.> and <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/VEBLEN/veb_toc.html.1996.>

desire'). Part of the image of the metropolis as a 'world upside-down', which will be dealt with in the next section of this chapter, is this role reversal and value reshuffle as portrayed in nineteenth-century French naturalist fiction.

Everything in the city is objectified, including things other than objects themselves: animals, people, places, and feelings. Everything becomes thus subject to sale, a product that one must have and must consume. This is part of the 'psychology of desire', as labelled by C. V. Eby in *Dreiser and Veblen, Saboteurs of the Status Quo*. Desire is closely linked to purchase and vice versa. Therefore, shop owners, retailers, and department store managers invested much effort into bringing to life the objects and items for sale. Indeed, to make the biggest profits, they had to be aware of the process involving the psychology of the consumer:

> We observe the psychology of the consumer in its purest form when Carrie wanders the Chicago department stores, which Dreiser calls "vast retail combinations [. . . that] form an interesting chapter in the commercial history of our nation" (22). The history to which Dreiser refers involves changes in merchandising during the second half of the nineteenth century, when methods of selling products were developed that remain common. In the 1850s and 60s, wholesalers began marketing standardized consumer wares--everything from underwear to coats, from curtains to furniture. The modern mass retailer, such as the department store (primarily serving urban populations) and mail order firms (bringing products to rural communities), developed in the 1870s and '80s.[44]

Clare Virginia Eby provides here more details about the whole retail system, characterising American cities at that time. Some of the details are already carefully

[44]Clare Virginia Eby. 'Cultural and Historical Contexts for *Sister Carrie*.' 2001.
In <https://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/dreiser/scculhist.html>. Accessed: 10-01-2008.10:30:20.

inserted in Dreiser's first novel and are philosophically explained in relation to the commerce-consumer balance:

> Customers benefited from lower prices and expanded choices, but these choices were intended to instill--as illustrated by Carrie in the Chicago department store--a new and curiously intimate relationship between purchaser and consumer goods.[45]

The object is thus emotionalised as much attachment is built around physical things. There is a close tie between the two elements of the commercial balance, so close a tie that they intermingle and interchange. The objects of desire become people and people become objects of desire (or animals, insects, and machines). This process of the objectification of people and the personification of objects is typical of urban spaces whose economy is regulated by financial capitalism.

Dreiser's *SC* lends voices of the objects –the 'so-called inanimate' have a language of their own since not anyone can decipher the hidden code of these items. Only consumers with a developed sense for understanding beauty, obviously materialistic beauty, can have the privilege of engaging into a conversation with the inanimate:

> Fine clothes to her were a vast persuasion; they spoke tenderly and Jesuitically for themselves. When she came within earshot of their pleading, desire in her bent a willing ear. Ah, ah! the voices of the so-called inanimate. Who shall yet translate for us the language of the stones.
> "My dear," said the lace collar she secured from Pardridge's, "I fit you beautifully; don't give me up."

[45]Clare Virginia Eby, *Op.cit.*

> "Ah, such little feet," said the leather of the soft new shoes, "how effectively I cover them; what a pity they should ever want my aid."
> Once these things were in her hand, on her person, she might dream of giving them up; the method by which they came might intrude itself so forcefully that she would ache to be rid of the canker of it, but she would not give them up.[46]

There are, actually, two broad ways to look at the object of desire in the urban consumerist centres. The first one is a rationally unjustified fetishisation, which consists of a perverted look at the object, one based on instincts. In their perversion, the consumers look at the object of desire as something that is meant to quench their thirst for consumption and pleasure. The second way is a perverted spiritualisation of the object, which acquires a divine nature and becomes mystical, sacred and holy. The consumers are pulled towards the object of their dreams by a compulsive drive leading them to purchase the much-wanted item for the sake of preserving it and protecting it from foreign hands. In fact, the object becomes for such consumers so sacred that they fear to profanate it, to stain it or pollute it. This object turns out to be the incarnation of a divinity, of a spirit worth being worshipped. Both ways to look at the object of desire are obsessive. It is noteworthy to say that the obsession and the possessiveness fantasies over mundane and luxurious objects are psychological syndromes of modern time consumerists.

In *Sister Carrie*, objects can speak. They desperately call out at the consumer, whom they plead to be purchased. For Dreiser, this is related to the innate consumerist drive, which is aroused, in the city, by the magnet attracting shop windows:

[46] Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit.,* chapter 11, p.98.

> Each separate counter was a show place of dazzling interest and attraction. She could not help feeling the claim of each trinket and valuable upon her personally and yet she did not stop. There was nothing there which she could not have used—nothing which she did not long to own. The dainty slippers and stockings, the delicately frilled skirts and petticoats, the laces, ribbons, hair-combs, purses, all touched her with individual desire, and she felt keenly the fact that not any of these things were in the range of her purchase.[47]

The items displayed to the amazed eyes of the consumers are here made human; they are personified. They acquire human features and traits; they are capable of understanding their purchasers; they can even talk to the heart and soul of the consumer –mainly female consumers–; they have emotions, a heart and a soul of their own. In other words, they are humans.

In Dreiser's novel, women are described as being those who understand objects the most. Even if descriptions of how Drouet and Hurstwood pay attention to their looks and have a refined taste in terms of attire purchase, women are depicted as more receptive to the inner voice of the objects:

> But women are peculiarly sensitive to the personal adornment or equipment of their person, even the dullest, and particularly is this true of the young.(...) With her the bloom of a rose may pass unappreciated, but the bloom of a fold of silk, never. If nothing in the heavens, or the earth, or the waters, could elicit her fancy or delight her from its spiritual or artistic side, think not that the material would be lost. The glint of a buckle, the hue of a precious stone, the faintest tints of the watered silk, these she would devine and qualify as readily as your poet if not more so. The creak, the rustle, the glow—the least and best of the

[47]Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit.,* chapter 03, p.22.

> graven or spun—, these she would perceive and appreciate— if not because of some fashionable or hearsay quality, then on account of their true beauty, their innate fitness in any order of harmony, their place in the magical order and sequence of dress.[48]

Women's knowledge of the importance of clothes (because of the importance of being seen in the city) is also highlighted by the author:

> Those who have ever delved into the depths of a woman's conscience must, at some time or other, have come upon that mystery of mysteries—the moral significance, to her, of clothes. A woman should some day write the complete philosophy of that subject. No matter how young she is, it is one of the things she wholly comprehends. There is an indescribably faint line in the matter of man's apparel which somehow divides for her those who are worth glancing at and those who are not. Once an individual has passed this faint line on the way downward he will get no glance from her. There is another line at which the dress of a man will cause her to study her own. This line the individual at her elbow now marked for Carrie. She became conscious of an inequality. Her own plain blue dress with its black cotton tape trimmings realized itself to her imagination as shabby. She felt the worn state of her shoes.[49]

People and the objects that surround them have thus a close relationship; people and objects are one. As Balzac says, 'Il est en effet certaines personnes qui n'ont plus ni le même aspect ni la même valeur, une fois séparées des figures, des choses, des lieux qui leur servent de cadre.'[50] This fusion of the objects and their owners represents the

---

[48]Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit.*, pp.22-23.

[49]Theodore Dreiser, *Ibid.*, chapter 1, p.7.

[50]Honoré de Balzac, *La Comédie humaine*, *Etudes de Mœurs*, *Scènes de la vie de Province*, *Illusions Perdues*, *Un Grand Homme de Province à Paris.* Roland Chollet (ed.). Paris : Gallimard, Pléiade, 1977. B2,T4, p.257.

last phase of consumerism. Objects become people/human beings and people become edible objects or goods. The city's mode of consumption now includes feelings, people, objects, places, space and time. It is up to the individual to demythologise the object in order to disentangle themselves from its firm grip, fuelled by fierce capitalist consumerism. Barthes comments that the 'fact that we cannot manage to achieve more than an unstable grasp of reality doubtless gives the measure of our present alienation: we constantly drift between the object and its demystification, powerless to render its wholeness. For if we penetrate the object, we liberate it but we destroy it; and if we acknowledge its full weight, we respect it, but we restore it to a state which is still mystified. It would seem that we are condemned for some time yet always to speak *excessively* about reality.[51] In other words, there is a close link between objects and alienation; the former possess the people who possess them.[52]

Such portrayal of the object in *SC* is akin to that of Maupassant and Zola:

> *'J'ai peur des murs, des meubles, des objets familiers qui s'animent d'une vie animale.'*
> *(Lui?)*
> (…) [l]es objets jouent un rôle important. Ils sont un substitut au manque d'affection dont souffrent, dans leur solitude, les personnages. (…) Les meubles anciens et les vieux objets ont une âme, ils ont gardé l'empreinte de ceux qui les ont possédés (…). [l]es objets ont non seulement une âme, mais ils ont aussi une vie (…). En effet, les objets ont une fonction magique qu'ils gardent secrète sous leur apparence naturelle de matière, de formes, de couleurs et d'immobilité ; et leur gardien, l'antiquaire, est un être redoutable qui semble posséder des pouvoirs

[51]Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*. Annette Lavers (trans.). New York: The Noonday Press, 1972 (Paris: Seuil, 1957). 'Necessity and Limits of Mythology' pp.159-60

[52]See Pierre Danger, *Sensations et Objets dans le Roman de Flaubert*, Paris : Armand Colin, 1973, 'Chapter 5 : Le Vocabulaire des Objets' (pp.159-85), p.182

> surnaturels. Le miroir est l'objet magique par excellence.[53]

The function of the object in the African novels under study is to help the natives emulate Western life. Nevertheless, they undergo a double process of alienation due to the complexity of the double context they live in: the urban context and the neo-colonial context. Just like Bovarysm and inferiority complex, the alienation of the natives in the city is felt twice.

To end, Carrie's realisation that the city of Chicago was no place of merriment as soon as she met her sister Minnie on the train platform, at her arrival (at the very beginning of the novel), signals the author's real view of city attire. City work is no pleasure for simple and honest bread-winners. Despite her sister's desolate state, and instead of going back home, she decides to avoid both her former life in the Province and her sister Minnie's life:

> Carrie realized the change of affectional atmosphere at once. Amid all the maze, uproar and novelty, she felt cold reality taking her by the hand. No world of light and merriment. No round of amusement. Her sister carried with her much of the grimness of shift and toil.[54]

As represented in realistic and naturalistic fiction, the deceptively attractive aspect of the city is notable and Chicago is only one of those 'cities of metallic promises and no hope.'[55]

---

[53]Guy de Maupassant. *Le Horla et Autres Contes Fantastiques*. Paris : Hachette Education- Classiques Hachette N°48, 01-01-2000. (Bernard Père et Clam).p.218.
[54]Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit.*, Chapter 1, p.11.
[55]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood*, chapter 3, p.71.

B-“Something Is Rotten” in the Urban Kingdom: The ‘Walled City’ or the Urban Jungle as a World Upside Down

In the novels under study, the glow of the city, suggested by its lights and places of delight, is sharply contrasted by its darker side: the determinist aspect of the metropolis. Indeed, since “all that glitters is not gold,” the hideous face of the city stands for as a disillusion, a deception to all the people who believed in their urban dreams.

Therefore, the present section deals with the city as an urban jungle, a Darwinian milieu, a kingdom where survival is attributed to the fittest. It is also a multidimensional symbol: an object (giant magnet), an insect (spider), and a person (a seductive woman). Part of the imagery related to its Darwinian aspect is its representation as an ocean, a sea, a walled city, and a big force.

The repulsive part of the city and its extremely harsh face (pitiless, insensitive, indifferent, thoughtless) will also be highlighted, along with its vices (mainly, its lure) and their fatal impact on city people. Among city vices, one can note prostitution, crime, injustices, segregation, corruption, violence (even among children), poverty and destitution, the proliferation of slums and the very low living standards there, excessive consumerism, and fierce competition. Clare Virginia Eby’s and Thorstein Veblen’s close examination of the phenomenon of consumption under the capitalist system is relevant when dealing with the extravagant spending in *SC* and *JN*, both of which can be related to Zola’s *Au Bonheur des Dames*. A parallel between the American metropolis and the modern postcolonial African city would be interesting to

draw here. Indeed, both urban settings are depicted by the authors as determinist environments –very much like Zola's portrayal of the city in his novels– which are mightier than the individual. The evil part of the city obviously reflects the dark side of capitalism on the common man.

Corruption, together with the image of rottenness (referring symbolically to excesses in corruption), will be focused upon, especially with reference to Zola's *L'Assommoir*, and *Le Ventre de Paris* as major influences on the authors' depiction of this issue in Chicago (*TJ*), New York (*Maggie*), Lagos (*NLE* and *JN*), Johannesburg (*CBC*), and Nairobi (*PB*). Sembene Ousmane's description of the City of Thiès in *God's Bits of Wood* sums up the idea of extreme corruption rooted in colonial Africa.

The image of the city as a world upside down stresses its Darwinian and determinist feature. There is, in urban settings, a complete reshuffle of human values and a total role reversal: people become objects and animals, objects become people, women are featured with male characters and men with female characters, there is a normality of vice and a repulsion at virtue, amorality/immorality become the norm and morality becomes abnormal, odd, and old-fashioned.

The treatment of the city as a Darwinian determinist place varies in tone from one author to another despite the similarities in the descriptive style. Paton's Johannesburg and Ngugi's Nairobi are painted as much darker than Ekwensi's Lagos. The former two are utterly Darwinian: there is no way out for the weakest, who gets trapped in its vortex. They are, in a way, 'fatal environments' (to use Richard Slotkin's phrase in his book with the same title) for the individual. Even among authors from the

same country, one can notice the difference in the description of the city's Darwinian aspect. In effect, Ekwensi's Lagos is a busy and lively environment that allows Jagua to distinguish herself from the mob and impose her presence even if this is achieved through vice. This light overall atmosphere of Ekwensi's Lagos is largely contrasted with Achebe's Lagos, which is totally dark, and pervaded by corruption and pessimism as to its change for the better in the future. Other issues related to the direct effects of capitalism on the individuals are treated by the authors in more or less similar ways. Such issues include social injustices and exploitation at work (especially, factory work) in *The Jungle*, *Maggie*, and *Sister Carrie*, as well as mine work in the suburbs of Johannesburg and in the city itself, in *CBC*. Issues related to determinism, mainly biological or hereditary determinism, such as alcohol and drinks are also dealt with by the authors to stress the defeating aspect of the city. Just as Zola's *L'Assommoir*, *CBC*, *TJ*, *JN* and *PB* enclose passages where drinks are abundant and their consumption is considerable mainly in the city –although in *JN* and *PB* local drinks are brewed to serve and 'save' the local economy, respectively the O.H.M.S. gin and Theng'eta.

The most noteworthy aspect which is typical of modern cities as jungles is corruption. The choice of the present section's title is not fortuitous since the focus here is this idea of filth and rot, both literally and figuratively, pervading the atmosphere of the metropolis. The city in the novels of our corpus is, indeed, stained with corruption. The African novels selected here abound in examples of the metropolis where corruption proliferates at all levels of the individual's life and the nation's course. It has, in fact, become the new urban currency, the new law by which

people must abide. Ngugi's Nairobi, Paton's Johannesburg, and Ekwensi's and Achebe's Lagos are perfect examples of this.

When tackling the theme of corruption in the African city, one cannot avoid observing the very difficult, complex, and problematic transition from traditional life to modern life. It is actually in this transitory period in the history of formerly colonised African countries that such ailment had settled and had become the label of its neo-colonial agents, who helped considerably but sadly to its dissemination. Chinua Achebe's *NLE* offers consistent material for discussion, especially when this problem is tightly related to the neo-colonial context following Nigeria's independence.

Indeed, in his second novel and sequel to *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease* (1960), Chinua Achebe tackles some important issues in relation to colonisation, namely, the disruption of values and the 'chaotic' situation in which the country found itself with the 'intrusion' of the white man. The writer also points out the political, cultural and social fragmentation of Nigeria. The 'decline' –at least of some aspects– of the country starts in *Things Fall Apart*; however, it is made more acute in *No Longer at Ease*, where the whole society seems to undergo a process of alienation. In this novel, everything is replicated and magnified, but the grandeur of the Ibo society in the years of Okonkwo does not seem to exist any longer. Achebe's viewpoint on the issue of transition towards modernity can be deduced from the ironic tone prevailing in the novel, the major theme of the work, namely the theme of corruption, and the device of allusion or intra-intertextuality.

Colonisation in Africa led to a cultural clash because of the differences between Europe and Africa (here, Nigeria) mainly in terms of culture and traditions. Most of the Nigerian people, as suggested in the novel, managed to adapt to the modern situation of their country. Obi Okonkwo, however, did not know how to cope with the crises engendered by colonisation; this led to his inevitable downfall. The image of modern Ibo society is pervaded with contradictions; it is torn apart by equally strong forces: Christianity and Paganism or Animism, traditions and modernity.

In his novel, Achebe casts light on the nature of modernity, its implications in the Nigerian society, as well as its consequences on the Ibo people. Obi, a scholarship secretary at the Federal Ministry of Education, wants to display a standard of living worthy of his high rank and Western education. He returns from England with great optimism for his motherland. Fuelled with idealism, he is determined to help in ridding his country of corruption and making of it a better nation. Nevertheless, he finds himself 'trapped' in a paradoxical situation; there is a huge gap separating his idealism based on his Western education and its relevance to the confusing reality of his society, where both old and new values apparently 'co-exist.' In many instances of the novel, the clash between traditional and modern values is made obvious.

The title of the novel, as a first example, bears one of the biggest ironies of the work. Obi's name (his full name being Obiajulu) means 'the mind at last is at rest' (Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*, Chapter one, p.6.) because his father was happy to see the birth of a son after he had had many daughters. In fact, the situation is just the opposite because it will *never* be at rest, the major reason being Obi's disobedient attitude towards his father. The title is two-dimensioned; it works both at the

individual and community level. It refers not only to Obi's confused mind (and his father's), but also to the disruption of values in the Ibo community (and by extension, Nigerian society) together with the loss of the 'grandeur' of Okonkwo's time.

The Umuofia Progressive Union (UPU) is an interesting example as well. Its members aspire to see Obi, the only Umuofian to be educated abroad, behave under a dual standard. They would like him to speak good English, and spend lavishly for them and for himself, the things -they believe- the European people usually do; at the same time, they expect him to honour the Ibo custom and tradition whereby an osu must not be taken as wife. The attitude of the UPU members seems paradoxical; while their intention in this 'encounter' context is to be flexible, the result of their actions (at least on Obi) is an image of individuals 'torn' between old and new values, native and foreign principles of life. Achebe points out what seems to be an irony. In *Things Fall Apart*, Isaac (Nwoye) rejects his father's religion because of its inflexibility, rigidity and brutality. He opts for Christianity. However, when his son, Obi, points out the inconsistency between Christianity and the osu taboo, he threatens him with a curse and a withdrawal of his blessings, and compares osuness with leprosy (chapter fourteen). His wife also warns her son that she would kill herself in case he married Clara. Ironically, the parents cling firmly to their traditions, although they use the Bible to dissuade Obi from marrying an outcast, thus mixing pagan and Christian values. Achebe attributes these contradictions to colonization –the European presence in Africa- and mentions the latter as the major culprit for the drastic change in the African society as well as the present disintegration of moral values.

However, the episodes of the novel that clearly reveal the 'conflicting' existence of both tradition and modernity are Obi's interview to get a Civil Servant post and his trip to his native village, Iguedo, in chapter five. The discussion Obi has with the chairman of the civil service (pp. 35-37) reveals Achebe's conception of modern tragedy which differs from the classical tragedy. The writer makes use of intertextuality in this episode. Obi finds the ending of Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter* a happy ending; for him, it is too simplistic for the hero to die at the end. He thinks that in a modern tragedy, the hero does not die but lives with an endless suffering. For him, the real tragedy never ends and is never resolved. This is quite ironical since Obi foretells the very kind of tragedy he will be involved in; at this precise moment, we do not know what his sentence for accepting the bribe will be and we are unaware of the mental suffering Obi will endure after leaving Clara and falling in the trap of corruption.

Obi's trip to Umuofia is also quite revealing of this difficult 'shift' in context. As he waits for the results of his job interview, Obi decides to go to Umuofia to see his family. In the lorry taking him home, he is confronted to a terrible reality in his society: bribery. The driver's assistant gives money (ten shillings) to a policeman to let them pass and the fine is that expensive because Obi protested against this action. He is quite shocked:

> 'What an Augean stable!' he muttered to himself. 'Where does one begin? With the masses? Educate the masses?' He shook his head. 'Not a chance there. It would take centuries. A handful of men at the top. Or even one man with vision---an enlightened dictator. People are scared of the word nowadays. But what

> kind of democracy can exist side by side with so much corruption and ignorance? Perhaps a halfway house---a sort of compromise.' When Obi's reasoning reached this point he reminded himself that England had been as corrupt not so very long ago. He was not really in the mood for consecutive reasoning. His mind was impatient to roam in a more pleasant landscape.[56]

What reinforces the idea of dirt suggested by the Augean stable is that of rot illustrated by the image of the 'wide-open storm drain from which came a very strong smell of rotting flesh.'[57] His country is so dirty, he thinks, that it would take very long to clear all the filth out. He wonders at the possibility of reconciliation between 'democracy' and 'so much corruption and ignorance' and thinks of the alternative of a 'compromise' between the two, but he soon gives up thinking about a solution as the thing seems to be a tough task. The only 'pure' element that soothes his mind is the 'pleasant landscape.' This mental state of confusion perhaps reflects Achebe's own state of mind at the realisation of the desperate situation the society had reached and the utopian belief that it can be remedied. What confirms Obi's thought about the 'mess' that characterises his present society is the song the traders sing in the over-crowded lorry:

An in-law went to see his in-law
Oyiemu-o
His in-law seized him and killed him
Oyiemu-o
Bring a canoe, bring a paddle
Oyiemu-o
The paddle speaks English

[56]Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*, Chapter five, p.40.
[57]Chinua Achebe, *Ibid.*, Chapter two, pp.13-14.

Oyiemu-o.[58]

The song sounds meaningless for Obi at first, but after he thinks deeply about it, he understands its significant sense. It is all about treachery, actually 'the height of treachery.' For the Ibo people, a man's in-law (as the elders say) is his chi or personal god; therefore, killing one's in-law goes against the traditional values of the community. And the fact that a paddle that speaks a language (here, the language of the coloniser) that its master -the 'native' fisherman- does not understand indicates not only a betrayal but reminds us much of Jeremiah's lamentations on the plant that turned against him after he, himself, had put it in the soil.[59] The paddle may refer to the Nigerian elite (represented by Obi) whose Western journey and education makes the gap between their society and themselves look so wide that, once back, they feel they are complete strangers in their own land. And, in the case of Obi and most characters in the novel, this educated category of natives 'betrays' the traditional value of integrity by surrendering to new 'immoral' modes of wealth acquisition. It is, in Obi's words, 'the world turned upside down.'[60]

Once in his village, he finds that a big ceremony is awaiting him. Before starting the ceremony, Isaac wants to say a Christian prayer, while an elder wants to break a kola-nut first (chapter five). They finally reach a compromise; a kola-nut is broken but the prayer is dedicated to Jesus. Obi's return is seen by the villagers as the

---

[58]Chinua Achebe, *Op.cit.*, Chapter five, p. 42.
[59]The *Bible*, 'Jeremiah' 2:21: Yet I had *plante*d thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate branches of a foreign vine unto me?', in <http://www.sourcedevie.com/lire-la-bible.htm.> Accessed on Friday, February 07th, 2014, 09.49 a.m.
[60]Chinua Achebe, *Idem*.

return of the 'prodigal son'[61] –Biblical reference– but his journey to the white man's land is assimilated to a journey to the land of the dead. For his society, he is already dead, both spiritually and psychologically.

Through the examples cited above, one can see the difficulty of 'co-existence' of the old and the new, the native and the foreign, the past and the present, the traditional and the modern. The British 'intrusion' can be felt everywhere, and the British imprint is left at each and every level of the society. As the two cultures are completely divergent, the presence of both in the same place (at least before Nigeria's independence or in the early post-independence years) can only be *conflicting*. What one may notice in the work is a 'forced' superposition of cultures whereby the new culture shades some aspects of the old one, leaving others –the most rigid elements– bare. If some characters in the novel, such as the UPU members and Christopher, have apparently an ability to be flexible in this new Nigerian reality, Obi is unable, first, to understand this new context, and then to see any 'logic' in this change in values. As an idealistic individual, Obi epitomises the Nigerian elite whose education abroad made their capacity to cope with the new realities very limited since they are now unfamiliar with the new face of their homeland.

The theme of corruption is central and recurrent in the novel. What we, readers of the novel, consider to be corruption, most of the characters would call it adaptability, flexibility with the new situation. In naturalistic terms, it may even be regarded as the 'survival instinct.' In fact, this ailment confirms the disruption of values resulting from the state of chaos in which culture and tradition were during the

[61]Chinua Achebe, *Op.cit.*, chapter one, p.4.

colonial and post-colonial times. If, in the past, the traditional ways of acquisition are land farming and trade, in the current context the end (power and influence) justifies the means, whatever their nature. In chapters seven and eight, there is a reference to Mr. Sam Okoli, called The Honourable Sam Okoli, who is a rich man via the practice of bribery and corruption. For his people, he is a sort of a hero because he succeeded to have position in society and the things of the white man. He is almost of the same rank as them. UPU meetings are frequently held to keep a link with ancient tribal solidarity, but the aim of these meetings is different. In chapter eight, one of these meetings is being held and its members discuss the way to help Joshua, who lost his job because he was sleeping while in service. They decide at the end to give him ten pounds to give as a bribe to find another job. However, the President of the Union, who was told by Joseph about Obi's will to marry Clara, warns Obi not to do it. Following the latter's violent reaction after the Union's interference in his private affairs, considered by him as intolerable in view of his Western education, a conflict emerges and is worsened by his financial problems, leading to his alienation from the Ibo tribe. The Union members use both a "modern" –corrupt– way of dealing with problems and aspects of tradition as well. Here, absurdity regarding such practices is made obvious by Achebe.

Obi is faced directly with bribery for the first time (in chapter nine) when Mr. Mark offers to give him money in exchange for a scholarship for his sister. Much surprised, Obi refuses both the offer of Mr. Mark and his sister's, Miss Mark, who pays him a visit later in his apartment. Obi's high sense of morality is revealed during a discussion with Christopher. While the latter uses unconvincing rationalisations to

justify the 'normality' of accepting 'immoral' situations, Obi clings to his principles. In fact, the theme of corruption is hinted at in as early as in chapter one. In the opening passages of the novel, Achebe points at the generalisation of corruption –public corruption- when he speaks about Obi's court case:

> Every available space in the court-room was taken up. There were almost as many people standing as sitting. The case had been the talk of Lagos for a number of weeks and on this last day anyone who could possibly leave his job was there to hear the judgement. Some Civil Servants paid as much as ten shillings and sixpence to obtain a doctor's certificate of illness for the day.[62]

Soon after, Mr. Green, Obi's boss, says plainly that the 'African is corrupt through and through', that they are 'all corrupt'[63] and that the British had brought them Western education but to no avail. The irony is that Obi, on the lorry taking him to Umuofia, much before his trial for corruption, consoles himself with the thought that 'England had been as corrupt not so very long ago.'[64] The images of dirt and rot illustrating the idea of corruption sharply contrasts with the image of a pure nature Obi describes in his nostalgic poem written during his first winter in England.[65]

The device of allusion or the use of intra-intertextuality is to stress the fact that the encounter East-West can only be conflicting. The reference to Achebe's first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* emphasises the *tragic* aspect of the novel and the desperate 'illusion' (as found in Obi's idealistic poem he

---

[62]Chinua Achebe, *Op.cit.*, Chapter one, p.1.
[63]Chinua Achebe, *Ibid.*, p.3.
[64]Chinua Achebe, *Ibid.*, Chapter five, p.40.
[65]*See* Obi's poem in Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*, Chapter two, pp.14-15.

wrote in England) that a possible reconciliation between two different cultures can be hoped for. In chapter eleven, Mr. Green, the white boss, is compared to Kurtz of *Heart of Darkness*. Mr. Green comes to Africa with the ideal of 'dominating' poor ignorant natives. Once in the continent, however, he becomes the 'slave' of duty and work, only to resign just after independence. Similarly, Kurtz comes to Africa with the ideal of 'civilising' the natives. He is, nevertheless, defeated by darkness and becomes 'a barbarian.' Obi said that Kurtz had 'succumbed to the darkness,' while Green had surrendered to 'the incipient dawn' or coming independence; their 'beginning and their end,' however, were 'alike'. With the failure of both in realising their African ideals, the idea of East-West co-existence also fails.

Things Fall Apart is referred to by the author for the same purpose as his reference to *Heart of Darkness*. The sense of tragedy is amplified, however, in his second novel. In the opening chapter, the writer hints at the once glorious town of Umuofia:

> Umuofia is an Ibo village in Eastern Nigeria and the home town of Obi Okonkwo. It is not a particularly big village but its inhabitants call it a town. They are very proud of its past when it was the terror of their neighbours, before the white man came and levelled everybody down.[66]

The author makes it clear that the time of one of Umuofia's heroes and Obi's grandfather, Okonkwo, had lost its lustre. The reason for this downfall is attributed to the coming of the white man. In chapters thirteen and fourteen, themes like social

[66]Chinua Achebe, *Op.cit.*, Chapter one, p.4.

osuness and the curse upon the family are revealed through hints at Achebe's first novel. To convince his son not to marry Clara, an osu, Isaac (Nwoye) tells Obi that he, himself, had been cursed by his father –Okonkwo- when he had left his house and followed the missionaries. It was, for him, 'terrible' for a man to be cursed by his father. Ironically, Obi later refuses to marry Clara, and is therefore not cursed, but he fails in many other ways and ends tragically in a court of justice, tried for receiving a bribe.

The whole novel dramatises the transition towards modernity and gives examples of the East-West encounter or the co-existence of modernity and tradition. For the critic Robert M. Wren, Achebe's view of 'modern Nigeria beyond the clan is largely pessimistic.'[67] For him, the writer conveys the view that with the substitution of tradition by colonial rule, the local community has lost its power on the individual, leading thus to both the fragmentation of society and the feeling of loss and alienation of the individual. The latter either fails or sacrifices his traditional moral values to take on the modern principles of morality. In support of this view, Annie Gagiano claims that *No Longer at Ease* clearly displays the failure of the 'transformative energies' (the educated Nigerians) to contribute to the 'emancipation' of their country at all levels. For her, at a time when 'self-rule' needed to replace the white man's rule, the Nigerian society sank in 'incompetence, division, and corruption.' She claims that the 'neocolonial dichotomy, i.e., society's contradictions, needs to be overcome by a new integration of modernity with the African realities. It would require discarding some existing Ibo idols, as well as European ideals.' If there is no commitment on the part of

[67]Robert M. Wren, *Achebe's World, The Historical and Cultural Context of the Novels of Chinua Achebe*. p.49

the individual and the society, the anarchic state will prevail everlastingly. In brief, Wren and Gagiano stress the idea that a harmonious existence of two different cultures needs sacrifices for both the country's progress and the emancipation of the Nigerian. There needs to be a balance between the old and the new because the process of modernisation requires time and sacrifices. Serious issues like corruption, mainly widespread in the urban milieu, can still prevail if such balance between past and present, traditional and new, is not achieved and if there is no full understanding of its weight for a nation's prosperity.

Ekwensi's corrupted side of Lagos in *JN* is strikingly akin to Achebe's in *NLE*. The only difference between the Lagos of Ekwensi and the Lagos of Achebe lies in the fact that their major characters –who are provincials moving to and living in the city– differ in gender: Obi (male) & Jagua (female); neither succeeds to tame the city, so strong being its impact on them. Jagua is tempted by city vices even faster than Obi. What seems to have retained Obi from being corrupt right from the beginning is his travel abroad, to England, and his Western education that instilled in him values of democracy, equality, and integrity. What ruins Obi, however, is his failure to realise that these very values cannot be applied in the neo-colonial context, paradoxically because the neo-colonial context in Nigeria (and Africa as a whole) is the result of European action; it is a colonial product *par excellence*, meant to perpetuate the colonial tradition long after the departure of the colonisers. So is the case of Freddie Namme, who goes on a study trip to Britain to bring its 'light' and teach it at school once back. Both Obi and Freddie are trapped by the corrupting nature of Lagos. Jagua seems to be the only character –a female character– who manages to save her life by a

return to the sources, in her native village of Ogabu. Since the city is symbolically a seducing woman, Ekwensi's hidden message here is that only a woman can fight equally against a woman, especially if they are rivals. Jagua, who is caught at first in the tempting web of the glittering urban opportunities offered by Lagos, comes in the end to the epiphany that the city is no place for her to prosper and bloom. She could realise that her rival, the city, deployed all her charms on her and held a firm grip of her, and could thus react before it would be too late to save her dreams and her life.

Ngugi's Nairobi and Paton's Johannesburg are cities conducive to corruption as well. Ekwensi's and Achebe's Lagos is not much different from Dreiser's, Sinclair's and Crane's Chicago and New York. The latter are described as places of corruption, in which people have money dreams which they never hesitate to fulfil, whatever the means.

The image of rottenness in the city is closely linked to the idea of corruption. Indeed, the idea of the urban milieu as a rotten 'kingdom' (hence the choice of this section's title) prevails in the novels selected and reflects a picture of dire corruption. This notion of putrefaction can be fairly traced back to Maupassant's and Zola's fiction. Part of the naturalist writing tradition, with its depictions of urban spaces as stunningly decadent, is present in the representative American and African novels selected.

C-“The Call of the Wild”: Nostalgia and the ‘Quest West for Walden’

The dissatisfactory urban experience that the provincials undergo is actually worse than their stifling countryside routine. Therefore, it would be quite relevant to examine the reactions of people who have arrived in the city from the countryside to the noxious impact of the former on their life. A combination of issues all related to these reactions, as mentioned in the novels under study, will be examined. The difference between the two sets of novels under focus lies in the fact that the African characters’ reactions to the frenzy of city life are provoked by a series of complex factors, owing to the rural-urban conflict, the poor-rich dichotomy, and the European-Native cultures collision. Indeed, contrary to the American characters who experience the province-metropolis clash at a single level, the situations of the characters in the African novels dealt with can be related to their colonial and post-colonial backgrounds, adding to the situations aforementioned.

The essence of the phrase ‘call of the wild’ is found in Jack London’s novel[68] and in Robert Service’s five-stanza poem[69], both bearing the same title. This call is a natural impulse pulling Man back to the sources, to Mother Nature (either Nature –the wilderness– or the countryside, that is, pastoral land). This call is generally the result of a whirl of circumstances and a set of factors, in the urban milieu, generating what is

[68]Jack London, *The Call of the Wild* (1903).
[69]Robert William Service, ‘The Call of the Wild’ (1916).

labeled as the primitivist[70] impulse (the impulse of going to the Wild) and the pastoral impulse (an urge to go to the countryside, or the province). The primitivist and the pastoral impulses consist, in brief, in an escape from the city to the countryside, an exodus back to the source, a return, a reverse movement to the one dealt with in chapter two. Both impulses come after epiphanic moments at a certain point in the life of the characters who, overwhelmed by the city's noxious effects on them, decide to take action and move out of the urban environment. What these characters seek is the quiet of country life and the authenticity that city life lacks. They, actually, go on a 'quest west'[71] –a reference, in the American context, to the frontier West, which symbolised endless possibilities and hopes for a better future based on land labour– or a 'quest for Walden'[72], referring to the ideal life in the woods which Thoreau experimented in Massachusetts and related in his *Walden, or Life in the Woods*.

These two major reactions of city dwellers after their journey in the metropolis are part of the broader theme of the journey (a theme discussed in chapter two) but it is a journey *back* 'home', Nature being that home. In other words, it is a *reverse* movement leading to one's origins, an escapist impulse from civilisation (as found in the city) to the province (a middle state between the city and wilderness). This theme, which is rather old in literature, flourished in the texts written in the Age of Enlightenment, the Romantic period, and the Realistic and Naturalistic currents. What fuels this urge to move back –adding to urban miserable circumstances– is a feeling of

[70]Richard Fusco thoroughly explains the essence of primitivism in Jack London's aforementioned novel. See Richard Fusco, 'On Primitivism in '*The Call of the Wild*'', *American Literary Realism*, Vol.20, No.1, Fall, 1987, pp.76-80.

[71]The phrase comes from the title of a chapter in Richard Daniel Lehan's *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History* (Berkeley & Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1998). Chapter 15 is entitled 'Quest West', pp.251-265.

[72]This phrase comes from Loren C. Owings's *Quest for Walden: The 'Country Book' in American Popular Literature* (North Carolina: Mc Farland & Company Publishers, 1997).

nostalgia for the past (a pastoral primeval past) and a series of recollections of pastoral memories.[73]

Actually, the reactions of people who have dwelled in the city to its overall atmosphere vary from one character to another, from one author to another, depending on the intention of each writer and their view of city life. For most, their initial journey to the city was motivated by a desire to improve their material living conditions which country life (in the village or the small town) could not offer them. Country dullness was a plague, an ailment that stifled them and the feeling of boredom (ennui) was a permanent state. Their need to extract themselves from the countryside 'trap' had guided them to the big metropolis, the giant setting known for its frenetic life, variety, diversity, consumerism, competition, and modernity. The city's crushing power, however, proves morally destructive. A Darwinian naturalistic setting *par excellence*, the city displays more miseries to them than promises for a better future. On a psychological level, 'modern time sicknesses' affected those who journeyed to the city in order to prosper and lead a better life. Indeed, adding to boredom/ennui, inferiority complex, alienation, schizophrenia, loss of all sense of belonging, and insignificance of 'Self', they undergo a more serious identity issue and psychological stress: a 'dissolution of Self'. These aspects will be dealt with in the next chapter, dealing with Bovarysm and idealism.

---

[73]In *Recalling the Wild: Naturalism and the Closing of the American West*, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2000), Mary Lawlor deals with the issue of Frontier closure in naturalist fiction and its impact on people willing to go back to a pastoral past that has actually disappeared due to urbanisation. Her phrase 'recalling the wild' refers both to the closing of the American West (the opposite of London's 'call of the wild') and to what remains of the once prestigious wilderness, that is, memories from the past.

The reactions of city victims, thus, vary from a novel to another and from one character to another. Some characters have no other choice but surrender to the city's crushing force. They are defeated simply because they are the weakest elements in the imposing 'urban jungle', so they go 'adrift with the current'. Obi (the main character in *NLE*) and Jurgis (the main character in *TJ*) and his folks are typical examples of this reaction. Some other characters reach a dead-end in the city and can no longer endure its miseries, so they opt for suicide as a final salvation. Maggie (the main character in *Maggie*) and Hurstwood (a secondary character in *SC*) decide to end their life because of New York's overwhelming pressure and cynical indifference towards their sufferings. Other characters, either trapped by the city's firm grip or smart enough to develop adaptation skills, manage to cope with the city and its vices; such is the case of Stephen Kumalo's sister, Gertrude (a secondary character in *CBC*). Yet some other characters who are strong enough to disengage themselves from the city's grip and traps respond to their instinctive call, their primitivist or pastoral impulses to go back to Nature or the countryside. Indeed, dispirited by the artificiality, superficiality and the fake attire of the metropolis, these people who feel nostalgia for past and pastoral authenticity follow their 'Walden' impulse in an attempt for 'Self' restoration (after undergoing a 'Self' loss in the urban milieu).[74] Good examples of such a reaction are Jagua (the main character in *JN*) and Bob Ames (a minor character in *SC*).

Bob Ames, a secondary yet very significant character in *Sister Carrie* (whom many critics of Dreiser's first work consider his mouthpiece), is disappointed by New York artifices and vices. So he decides to return to his native West, far from

[74]In chapter four, section two, we will refer to Georg Simmel's 'Metropolis and Mental Life', which examines the effects the sociology of city life and its impact on the individual's psychological state.

metropolitan corruption, in order to 'save his soul' (hence his name 'Ames', the French word for 'souls'). In the novel, he is the only sensible character, the only one with a very divergent philosophy of life from that of those surrounding him, the only one who reads (he recommends Balzac to Carrie, who remains undecided as to whether morality still has a place in life or not). Bob Ames embodies the optimism of the modernists, engendered by a romantic idealistic vision of the province, where a relatively better life can exist, even if it is imaginary.

It is important here to point at the opposed journeys of country people and city people referred to as the 'Quest East for the City' and the 'Quest West for Walden'. This parallel between the two movements –the movement forwards and the movement backwards– only reflects the constant movement to and fro of wanderers. In contrast with romantic characters, naturalistic characters are in permanent search of a better place; the truth is that they aimlessly roam between two milieux that offer no prospect of positive change for the individual. The pastoral is a 'heap of ashes' and the city is a gigantic trap, identical to mouse-traps, in which small preys struggle to disengage themselves, in vain. Thus being said, can the pastoral impulse really be the ultimate way out of the city's grip after a long stay in her lap? For some of the selected American and African authors, it is indeed the final resolution to the troubles of the metropolis. For the others, it is illusory.

In modernist and postmodernist American literature, the tendency is to create at least one character in each work who has this impulse for the pastoral. He or she is generally the main character, and lives in an urban environment. This is what Loren Owings calls "Quest for Walden", in his book of the same title, where he evokes this

modern penchant (though revisited to fit the modern context) for the province, under the influence of Thoreau's book *Walden*. In realist and naturalist literature, the main characters tend to have the opposite feeling, and do the opposite movement: they move to the city. In most cases, the secondary characters are those who flee the city and go to the countryside in search of psychological balance; this occurs at an unconscious level, the conscious drive would be to find a 'cure', or to go on a search for the feeling of well-being, and healing, after the deep damage caused by the negative effects and harmful influences of the metropolis both on their life and on their inner self. Thoreau in *Walden* and Emerson in *Nature* speak precisely of this quest for the healing of body and soul in the natural environment. Rousseau preceded them in his *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*. The countryside, much deteriorated after the Civil War (therefore, already starting around the 1870s) in terms of values first of all (and in terms of environment, later), began to nurture the fantasies of those who thought they could easily find paradise (a concrete and material one) in the city and were quickly disillusioned. Their dystopia (more acute than utopia) engendered a feeling of nostalgia for their original rural environment which they considered as a relatively purer place, where the inhabitants still keep human and moral values, and where a form of innocence characterises young men and young women.

It is true that this vision (born out of their nostalgia for the countryside) is idealistic, given the fact that the rural environment has undergone –with the introduction of capitalism– many changes, a real metamorphosis actually. However, it is this same vision that will give rise to hope for a better post-urban life, and it is indeed the optimistic touch that characterises some characters in realistic, naturalistic,

and modernist works, such as those of the Lost Generation of disenchanted writers established in Paris. This leads us to refer again to Nietzsche's article ‘On the Use and Abuse of History’, where he says that the value of the past (and, by extension, things of the past) exists only in the eyes of the individual (or the people, or the community) who sees this past, who believes in it or who still clings to it –a value, therefore, which is relative according to him.

That said, this impulse remains a myth, the pastoral myth as dreamed of by Thomas Jefferson, as well as the romantics and the idealists. It remains utopian because the context of industrialisation and urbanisation in post-war America turned out to be incompatible with ideals whose essence can only be materialised through an unsullied medium, where decadence has not yet shown its signs –an environment therefore non-existent. The myths of the pastoral, of the agrarian paradise, of the Garden of Eden, of the (western) border remain myths and they need to be demythologised, deconstructed. The second option is even more impossible to make concrete than the first. Indeed, the primitivist impulse, which consists in isolating oneself in virgin nature, moving away from anything that can corrupt the soul – including the urban environment, the modern provincial environment, and even men– if we consider, however, that Man is innocent and harmless and that he is corrupted only by his contact with other people. It is a radical ‘solution’ and does not necessarily ensure a long-lasting healing effect for the body and the soul; it can contribute to a relatively durable appeasement if the entrenchment within virgin nature is somewhat long-lasting but not definitive. Of course, like the other myths, this starts with an ideal, not quite a utopia. So in terms of feasibility, it can be achieved.

The African context, as mentioned, is characterised by the same features and the same movements, though with a significant difference: the African characters, whether they are provincials or city dwellers, suffer twice as much from the dullness and suffocation of the countryside, due to the double parallels of country-city, natives-settlers, Black-White, and colonised-colonisers. With the loss of the countryside and the impossibly corrupted city, Africans are not only deprived of a place where they could prosper but they are deprived of their land, be it in the country or in the city, and this loss causes more serious cultural and identity problems.

There are characters for whom the journey back to the sources is successful and produces the bliss hoped for, although there are others for whom the expected solace does not occur. Jagua Nana's return to Ogabu is a regenerative cure. After realising that her Lagos dream was a hollow one, she decides to shift her dreams towards more virtuous means of money acquisition: becoming a merchant princess in Onitsha, or Accra. Ogabu life for her was soul soothing after the political turmoil she found herself involved in with Uncle Taiwo. It was thus a relief to come to a reconciliation with her native village, which she contrasted sharply with Lagos and its frantic life:

> Jagua never thought she would be able to adapt herself to the new life. She found, after a few months of it that the atmosphere in Ogabu had a quality about it totally different from the Lagos atmosphere. That driving, voluptuous and lustful element which existed in the very air of Lagos, that something which awakened the sleeping sexual instincts in all men and women and turned them into animals always on heat, it was not present here. Here in Ogabu, men dressed well but sanely. Women were beautiful but not brazen. They had become complementary to the palm trees and the Iroko, the rivulets and the fertile earth.

> They were part of their surroundings as natural as the wind. Whereas in Lagos MAN was always grappling to master an ENVIRONMENT he had created. It was money, money, yet more money. She did not find the same rush here, the desire to outstrip the other fellow. No time, sorry, too busy, time is short. Time, time. I must go now! … None of that here. She was resting.[75]

This parallel between Lagos life vs Ogabu life (or virtue vs vice, sin vs faith), which Jagua ponders over, comes after her epiphanic moment whereby she understood the luring nature of city life and its disillusioning quality:

> Jagua rose and began to take off her clothes. She wanted to go home now, back to Ogabu. She wanted to go to Krinameh to see if Chief Ofubara would still take her. She felt a deep hungry longing for her mother. Lagos for her, had become a complete failure. She must try and start life all over again, but not in Lagos. If Brother Fonso could help her, she wanted nothing better than to be a real Merchant Princess at Onitsha.[76]

The key characters in *PB* do return to Ilmorog, not because of its beauty but because they hoped for a change, a revolution that would free the peasants from their dependence on corrupt local MPs who prosper in the city at the expense of their fellowmen in the rural areas. Wanja asks Munira about the real reason why Ilmorog natives go to the city and then come back. Though her tone is quite ironic, since she suffers herself from village life, she mentions the fact that one possible reason was part of a 'healing process':

---

[75]Cyprian Ekwensi*,* *Jagua Nana*, chapter 24, pp.180-1
[76]Cyprian Ekwensi*,* *Op.cit.*, chapter 22, pp.171

> 'Wait a minute. We should turn this into a church. Those tired of the city can come here. They will wash the pain in their souls with beer and dancing. Or a sanatorium. A big one. They run away from their wives and children for a weekend. Roast goat meat. Drink beer. Dance. Get cured. Go back to the waiting wives. Or, Mwalimu: what should we do to this place? To Ilmorog? Isn't a teacher the true light of the village? Would you light a fire and hide it under a tin? Seriously Abdulla, start brewing Chang'aa, or Muratina, any of these. Kill me-Quick. Truly these drinks kill people but they still go on paying their hard-earned last cent to hasten their death. Buying the right to die sooner. Here in the village people will die under this sun and they'll not pay you for it. So Abdulla, brew Chang'aa. Get rich on the misery of the poor.' Her smile as she said this seemed cunning and sinister.[77]

Likewise, Stephen Kumalo, in *CBC,* succeeds to convince Absalom Kumalo's pregnant girlfriend to return to Natal, out of hope for change in the Black-White relations.

As to the American context, Bob Ames (*SC*) flees the city bound West in search of authenticity and regeneration. The metropolis's whole atmosphere of temptation and vice did not fit his intelligent mind. Carol Kennicott (*MS*) also goes back to Gopher Prairie hoping to achieve her old dream of social reform in the small village (the book, however, ends with a dead-end; her husband's priorities reveal to her that nothing will ever change).

In Sinclair's *The Jungle*, which is a novel of Chicago, Jurgis's short leave in the rural surroundings of Chicago and his temporary work there allow him to forget his

[77]Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood*, chapter 4, p.90

own sorrows. It helps him soothe his soul and alleviate the weight of grief over his recent losses:

> Only think that he had been a countryman all his life; and for three long years he had never seen a country sight nor heard a country sound! Excepting for that one walk when he left jail, when he was too much worried to notice anything, and for a few times that he had rested in the city parks in the winter time when he was out of work, he had literally never seen a tree! And now he felt like a bird lifted up and borne away upon a gale; he stopped and stared at each new sight of wonder—at a herd of cows, and a meadow full of daisies, at hedgerows set thick with June roses, at little birds singing in the trees.[78]

Jurgis's trip to and stay in the countryside reveal the beautiful country scenes, and Jurgis's nostalgia for the pastoral back in Lithuania. Since he had left Lithuania, coming to the US in the pursuit of an American dream, he had not seen trees. Work is available in the rural region near Chicago because of the harvest time but the fall was very cold so he leaves again for Chicago.

In the next chapter, we are informed of the tragedy that fell upon him again on his return to Chicago, in the fall. He had found a new job (digging underground tunnels for railway freight) but ignores the reason of these tunnels. It is a temporary work, he breaks his arm and loses his job, spending thus all his money on alcohol, reminding us much of Zola's Gervaise, in *L'Assommoir*.

Is the countryside as an efficient alternative, or a refuge? Asking this question is similar to asking the question: 'Is the city a good home?' In the light of Nietzsche's

[78]Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*, chapter 22, p.127

article “On the Use and Abuse of History for Life”, one may come to the conclusion that the countryside may not be that pure. It is pure because people give it that value of innocence, that halo of purity. It has, just like the city, its virtues as well as its vices. Nostalgia thus for a pastoral past is relative and subjective:

> For the things of the past are never viewed in their true perspective or receive their just value; but value and perspective change with the individual or the nation that is looking back on its past. There is always the danger here, that everything ancient will be regarded as equally venerable, and, everything without this respect for antiquity, like a new spirit, rejected as an enemy.[79]

Nietzsche further adds that ‘(…) Goethe may be right in asserting that we cannot help developing our faults at the same time as our virtues; and an excess of virtue can obviously bring a nation to ruin, as well as an excess of vice.’[80]

Therefore, if we consider the countryside to be a place of virtue and the city a place of vice, and bearing in mind that excesses in both is not good for the nation’s future, then the ideal state would be to find a middle ground between the two settings. Can this middle ground be found? In the realistic and naturalistic context, it cannot. Therefore, the individuals go again on their journey to find happiness, either in their physical world or their imaginary world, that is, their dreams and ideals. One such example is found in Joris-Karl Huysmans’s *A Rebours*, where the major character, Des Esseintes, flees civilisation and lives in seclusion. Yet, at the end, he accepts the fact

[79]Friedrich Nietzsche’s ‘On the Use and Abuse of History for Life’ is the second essay of his four *Untimely Meditations* published between 1873 and 1876.
In< http://en.wikisource.org/w/index.php?oldid=1105219> (The text is in the public domain. 1874). 3-page 08 ‘Preface’, p.01
[80]*Idem.*

that he cannot escape society for good. He needs to make concessions and reach a compromise with the environment that he could not tolerate.

Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and Robert William Service's 'The Call of the Wild' (1916) are actually calls for a return to primitive life, raw nature being the best cure from social evils as seen in big cities. The fifth stanza of Service's poem is highly significant:

They have cradled you in custom,
they have primed you with their preaching,
They have soaked you in convention through and through;
They have put you in a showcase; you're a credit to their teaching --
But can't you hear the Wild? -- it's calling you.
Let us probe the silent places, let us seek what luck betide us;
Let us journey to a lonely land I know.
There's a whisper on the night-wind,
there's a star agleam to guide us,
And the Wild is calling, calling… let us go.[81]

Robert William Service points at the hypocrisy of social teachings and calls for an understanding of the silence of the woods which, for him, is the best of all teachers. Yet, here again, is the Wild good enough for the individual or is it luring too? What is the characters' life after and beyond the big metropolis? Can they fulfil their new dreams out of the city's grip or are they going to sink in the abyss of their disillusions? Refuge in utopias such as ideal cities, utopian cities like the 'Garden City', and the 'Celestial City' is even far more disillusioning.

[81]'The Call of the Wild' by Robert William Service (1916), In *The Spell of the Yukon and Other Verses*, published in Britain under the title *Songs of a Sourdough*. New York, N. Y., Newark, N. J.: Barse & Co., 1916.

Endless is the fight, thus, between Mater Natura (the biological mother represented by rural areas, province, and countryside) and Alma Mater (the fostering mother: urban area, the metropolis, the city) over who would attract modern time Man and would win his heart.

Chapter Four

Country People and City People: A Comparative View

Life swings like a pendulum to and fro between pain and boredom.
Arthur Schopenhauer

We are insects produced by heat and wither and pass without it.
Theodore Dreiser, ***Sister Carrie***

Introduction

While the previous chapter focuses on the environmental factor as determinant in the creation of naturalist fiction, it is equally important to study how the characters of such fiction are portrayed within its framework.

There are three aspects that can be considered in this respect, and contained in the sections which follow. The first section, entitled 'Country People and City People: The 'Moths of the Lamp' and the Incandescent Glow', is devoted to the study of country people and city people in twentieth-century America and Africa, specifically within their context in the novels, as portrayed by the selected authors. The focus will be on the way these people are portrayed in the province, but most importantly, on how they live in the city. So light will be cast on the way people in the city are depicted by the authors. This includes their outlook, their attitudes, and their *place* in the city. This place is totally insignificant and the characters are reduced to glitter-drawn insects in the gigantic metropolis. However, as to the whole body of symbolism related to these city visitors/inhabitants (such as the imagery showing them as animals and objects), this remains the subject of the second section of chapter three. And owing to the significantly lower status of the peasant/farmer and the decadence of the morality of the provincials, country folks are painted as bad-mannered, in contrast to city people who are shown as 'refined' and well-behaved.

The second section, entitled 'The 'Not-so-Fallen' Woman: The Figure of the Prostitute in Realistic and Naturalistic Urban Fiction', will be dealing with one of the most significant characters in the city: the fallen woman. Indeed, in the American and

African urban centres, the prostitute appears as a strong figure, challenging city forces. This, of course, only applies to "the fittest" in the urban jungle.

The third and last section, entitled 'The Idealist: The Impossible Dreamer and the Pragmatic Dreamer between Bovarysm and Alienation', centres around the features of the idealist and the pragmatic, in the light of such important concepts as Bovarysm, boredom or ennui, inferiority complex, and alienation.

Examination of the characters dealt with in this chapter cannot be complete without a comparative study of the protagonists with the key characters of the French realists' and naturalists' in their works aforementioned, in the light of the theory of influence and intertextuality.

A- Country People and City People: The 'Moths of the Lamp' and the Incandescent Glow

Prior to the examination of people in the city, portrayed in the guise of insects, unable to engage in a mental process such as thinking about their destiny, it is necessary to cast light on their pristine attitudes before they get to know the city.

The authors selected here portray their provincials as pure and innocent characters before their journey to the city. This innocence of country folks, mainly country women, soon dissipates when they travel to the city. Their transplantation from a rural environment to an urban environment is decisive: it radically changes their life, often

for the worse, and, occasionally, for the better. This depends, of course, on the characters' own perception of happiness and its standards, as well as on the authors' messages revealed by their mouthpieces.

The idea of the ephemeral character of country folks' innocence is related by the authors to a significant factor. Although writers like Dreiser state that country people's loss of purity and surrender to the material in the city is an innate impulse (as ambiguous and contradictory as it may seem), the actual deterioration of the countryside from which they spring urges their exodus to the city. Contrary to the romantic and the early realistic pastoral, the province in naturalistic fiction is as deterministic an environment as the city. The state of the countryside is, actually, reflected on its inhabitants. There is a close relationship between man and his surrounding environment. Here, it is based on the pessimistic naturalist determinism not on the romantic osmosis between man and Nature, their mutual understanding, and their fusion into one harmonious entity. Country people heading to the city are, consequently, depicted here as innately virtuous and pure. Their first tendency is not material-oriented, and their dreams are not exclusively money-centred. They aspire to change their present conditions for the better, to prosper financially, without the greed they have within a Darwinian capitalist milieu.

In Dreiser's first novel, *Sister Carrie*, the protagonist originally from the Midwestern Columbia City, Wisconsin (with a European immigrant descent), Caroline Meeber had 'neither guile nor rapacity'[1]. She abides by the conventional social codes under which she has been raised, at least until she can no longer bear her stay at her

[1]Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, chapter 14, p.122.

sister's in Chicago. She is good in essence; her 'fountain' water clear soul and country-tainted 'freshness' like the 'fruit of a tree'[2] clearly indicate that she was the 'raw' product of country air and light. She was not corrupt, as depicted in the early passages of the novel's opening chapters; yet, she is shown as emotionally weak due to her heart's 'longings' for novel experiences, new acquaintances, and things of the city. She is feeble in the sense that, when exposed to the glitter of the city, she is more inclined to surrender to it.

In *The Jungle*, Sinclair's people from Lithuania (the whole group of immigrants in Chicago, including Jurgis's family and relatives) have the innocence of farmers and country people. In their motherland, they used to be one with the land, whose labour was their source of income. In the whole novel, little is said about their pastoral life in their native Lithuania. The obvious instance where we see Jurgis admiring farmlands and accepting to work during the harvest occurs in chapter 22, when he wants to get over the tragic news of his son Antanas's sudden death, in the mud of the street gutter. In this particular passage, he has, at last, the time and opportunity to admire the green scenery on the outskirts of the Prairie City, to feel the fresh air of rural areas, and simply to look at the surrounding trees –something he could not do in Chicago, in three years.

With regard to African literature, the whole host of villagers who move to the city are depicted in the same way. Whether their journey is a simple or a return travel, all of Jagua (Ogabu-Lagos-Ogabu); Freddie Namme (Bagana-Lagos-UK-Lagos); Obi

---

[2]Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit.,* p.123.

Okonkwo (Iguedo-UK-Lagos); Stephen Kumalo (Natal 'Ixopo'-Johannesburg-Natal); Gertrude, John, and Absalom Kumalo (Natal-Johannesburg); Wanja (Ilmorog-Nairobi-Ilmorog) and Abdulla, Munira, and Karega are portrayed as naturally innocent individuals before their fatal contact with the urban milieu. Provincials who go to the city and some city people are also depicted as innately good despite the fact that their child-like innocence instantaneously fades as they come to face the giant metropolis. This again is related to the dreary aspect of their native province and the treacherous aspect of the city.

In Lewis's *Main Street*, Carol Milford, though a Minnesota-born woman, is shown in the early chapters as someone who is unfamiliar with the Prairie villages (her father being a judge from Massachusetts). She actually ends up living in Minnesota and learns village ways and customs, especially after her settlement at Gopher Prairie. She is, all at once, 'a fragile child,'[3] pretty, dynamic and energetic, adventurous, gracious, intelligent, and feels like a 'restless'[4] missionary with a 'liberator'[5] future.

In *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (A Story of New York)*, Crane's Maggie is also primarily virtuous –though a poor slum girl– at least before she is left by Pete. She lacks vice and has an innocent nature, as satirically noted by the 'woman of audacity' whom Pete had met in the hall, there 'was something in them [her eyes] about pumpkin pie and virtue.'[6]

[3]Sinclair Lewis, *Main Street*, Chapter 1, p.2.
[4]Sinclair Lewis, *Ibid.*, p.9.
[5]Sinclair Lewis, *Ibid.*, p.4.
[6]Stephen Crane, *Maggie : A Girl of the Streets*, chapter 16, p.71.

Emmanuel Obiechina, in *Culture, Tradition and Society in the West African Novel*, gives a thorough examination of the way rural and urban characters are depicted in West African fiction. Dealing with the domestication of this fictional genre in West Africa, he illustrates the different approaches West African writers adopt when treating their characters –approaches, to him, typical of the African context within a Western literary mode of writing. He, in a way, shows the originality of West African writers in their character conception and mise-en-scène.

Concerning characters set in rural novels, Emmanuel Obiechina says that

> Characterization in the rural novels can be seen to partake of the special nature of the traditional culture, especially the status and professional definition of individuals, the organic nature of family and community relationships, the religious and mystical interpretation of character traits through such phenomena as relationship with tutelary deities, possession by a deity or spirit and the imputations to particular people of witchcraft and extraordinary psychic powers.[7]

For that critic, indeed, the characters must be dealt with within their cultural context, so that their motivations are fully grasped. It is necessary to understand 'the minds and the emotions of the characters, and their realistic social behaviour'; but the characters should also be seen as 'real human beings within realistic structures of personal and social relationships,' as put forward by Obiechina. Outside their milieu, they cannot be studied accurately and they cannot give due justice to their author's message. Thus, a

[7]Emmanuel Obiechina. *Culture, Tradition and Society in the West African Novel*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980 (1975). Part II: Domestication of the Novel in West Africa, p. 101.

careful treatment of the characters requires a fair knowledge of their cultural background.

As to characters set in the modern urban milieu, the critic points at the fact that they are a reflection of their new setting but that their reactions to this new setting varies since the 'African novelist finds his cues in traditional beliefs and values which determine the psychological responses of characters born and bred within traditional society.'[8] In other words, these characters will try to cope with their new condition using different adaptation skills and strategies for the sake of survival in an urbanised environment:

> Characters in the modern urban setting tend to be marked by their extreme individualism. They appear as single and often isolated individuals. The absence of a unified cultural ethos leaves them with an immense degree of individual initiative and they are much freer in their thinking. The chances thrown up by great social and economic change encourage them to be physically and mentally mobile. A combination of all these factors produces a prototype urban individual. He is not so much intelligent (…). He is adaptable because the wider scope of his experiences in the city prepares him to step into different roles. His lack of a unified vision of cultural (including moral) values leaves him free to indulge his instincts, drives and appetites. (…). We are most aware of these characters first as urban types –with the emphasis on "urban"- before being aware of them as individuals.[9]

[8]Emmanuel Obiechina, *Op.cit.*, pp. 101-2.
[9]Emmanuel Obiechina, *Ibid*., p.102.

Obiechina sums up the portrait of one of Ekwensi's urban characters in *People of the City*, Amusa Sango, with whom we can associate Jagua. In effect, just like in Jagua, in Sango 'we see the transforming effect of the city on its inhabitants. He comes to the city from an eastern Nigerian village, full of hope and with a heart responsive to filial loyalty and affection, but he is soon sucked into the miasma of urban corruption, coarsened by the overwhelming materialism of the city and toughened by the constant struggle for survival.'[10] We are given, in this quote, the feature of purity and loyalty characterising country folks as they come to the city. However, this virtue is soon lost as both he and Jagua 'are drawn to the city by the lure of the lights and are thereafter swallowed by the city much as a corn-mill swallows corn, grinds it fine and reissues its peculiar end-product. As a result they largely represent the pervasive corruption, restless vitality, insatiable greed and shameless superficiality of the city.'[11] It is yet significant to differentiate Jagua from other urban typical characters. While the other character types are victims of the urban environment, which 'seems to drain away their individual humanity'[12], Jagua is an individual, a rebel who can free herself from the city's grip. Evidence is shown in the novel's ending chapters where she decides to throw aside her Lagos life and go back to her native village, Ogabu, to start afresh. In a way, Jagua distinguishes herself from the 'mass' of type characters who surrender to city forces. Her return homeward stands for her recovery of her *free will* and her choice to answer the call of the wild in an attempt to get back her purity long hidden under the vicious veil of Lagos City.

[10]Emmanuel Obiechina, *Op.cit.*, p.102.
[11]*Idem.*
[12]*Ibid.* p.103

Despite the fact that she 'has been drawn to Lagos by the lure of adventure, freedom, prosperity and, above all, the shield of anonymity which it holds out to the dissatisfied (…) and to the adventurous provincial'[13], Obiechina notes, the reader is more inclined to appreciate her for 'her warmth of feeling and vitality, her underlying good nature and charitableness in the midst of so much greed and egotism.'[14] She can be considered as external to 'parabolic' characterisation, where characters are weighed in terms of their moral values instead of being understood psychologically. Ekwensi does not engage in parabolic characterisation; through Jagua, he examines 'contemporary urban manifestations like obsessive materialism, crime, violence and prostitution, which are essentially products of a particular changing social scene.'[15]

The inner virtue and essential innocence mentioned here dissipates with the acid-like contact with the 'walled' city. Indeed, the feature that many characters of our corpus share is the flagrant insignificance of their presence in the city –whether they are provincials in it or city dwellers who lose their prestige and fortune like Hurstwood– and their reduction to atoms, insects, dust, and empty shells.

This insignificance of the individual in the city is actually meant, first, to minimise the place of man in a Darwinian universe and, second, to maximise the power of the latter. The urban milieu is so big that men turn out to be insects in it. The most recurrent image that best illustrates man's complete devaluation in the metropolis is that of the 'moth'. The moth is associated with lamp or flame, that is, a source of

[13]Emmanuel Obiechina, *Op.cit.*, p.104
[14]*Idem.*
[15]*Idem.*

light or heat. Its attraction to the flame is described as fatal, since moths are burnt with the contact of a hot lamp.

The moth image referring to people in the city, who are attracted by its lights, derives from the works of the French realists and naturalists which have influenced the authors of our corpus. In Zola's works, this literary device is omnipresent, especially in his Rougon-Macquart cycle:

> (p.9)La ville est fluide et changeante comme le fleuve qui (p.10) la traverse et la marque de son signe: l'eau. Comme aussi le feu qui illumine les rues neuves, transforme les becs de gaz en pièces de vingt francs sous les yeux gourmands de Saccard, fait flamber les passions, consume les êtres imprudents ou fragiles, brûle les fortunes dans un "feu de joie colossal".[16]

This is how Henri Mitterand, in his introduction to *La Curée* (*The Kill*), describes Zola's Paris as a lamp attracting moths. It is, indeed, a gigantic lamp to which 'fragile beings' (compared to moths, whose wings are fragile too) are drawn. But Zola does not use this parallel only in *La Curée*; he mentions it in *Au Bonheur des Dames* (*The Ladies' Paradise*), *L'Assommoir* (*The Drinking Den*), and *Le Ventre de Paris* (*The Belly of Paris*).

Figuratively, the moths in the city are people who are instinct-driven and who are attributed urban vices such as, rapacity, fierce rivalry, greed, insatiable appetites, pleasure-seeking, sensuality and lust. The 'Mob of Moths', as one can call them, are

[16]Henri Mitterand, 'Préface' (pp.5-14.), in Emile Zola, *La Curée*. Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1996 (1871). pp.9-10.

actually the aimless/wandering mass of people that roam city streets in search of lamp heat. Dreiser's *The Color of a Great City* opens with such insignificant crowd:

> There are millions and millions but what do they do? Tramp aimlessly, for the most part, here and there in shoals, to see a ball game, a football game, a parade, a prize-fight, a civic betterment or automobile exhibition or to dance or dine in a hall that holds a thousand.[17]

This 'Moth of the Flame' (or 'Moth of the Lamp') image is so recurrent that in urban spaces one can even refer to it as the 'Myth of the Moth'. The reason behind its development into a myth is simply due to the fact that those moths continue to make their way to the city in 'endless processions' although stories of failure in the city abound.

The obstinacy of these people at forcing the walls of the Babel tower reinforces the idea that they have little, if at all, intelligence. That is why they are referred to as empty shells, atoms or imperceptible particles in a vast universe. They are hollow men, wandering desperately about in the insensitive metropolis, in search of a dream to be fulfilled. Their longings are all metallic, glittering, and materialistic. The very core of their dreams is a void, and thus, they walk about the city streets aimlessly, like scarecrows, shadows living only where there is light, fake night light (not plain sunlight/ daylight) –for in darkness, they vanish. Drouet and Hurstwood are good illustrations of city moths chasing the flame.

---

[17]Theodore Dreiser. *The Color of a Great City*. New York: Boni & Liveright: 1923. Foreword, p.vi

City moths are associated with the ‘Lighted Chamber’, the ‘lamp’, in the warm city interiors that attract them. City places and lights stand for the notion of ‘lamp’ at large:

> Yet here is the fact of the lighted chamber; the dressy, greedy company; the small, self-interested palaver; the disorganized, aimless, wandering mental action which it represents—the love of light and show and finery which, to one outside, under the serene light of the eternal stars, must seem a strange and shiny thing. Under the stars and sweeping night winds, what a lamp-flower it must bloom—a strange, glittering nightflower, odour-yielding, insect-drawing, insect-infested rose of pleasure.[18]

These characters are often referred to as moths. Indeed, in *MS, JN*, *TJ* and *CBC*, this image of individuals as insects is familiar. In Paton’s *CBC*, ‘Johannesburg is not a place for a woman alone.’[19] Johannesburg is an ocean for Gertrude, who is crushed by its force, away from her native Natal. She ends up down in the abyss. In *Maggie*, Crane portrays people going to saloons as insignificant entities but it is in “The Blue Hotel” that a host of lice are attracted ‘to a whirling, fire-smote, ice-locked disease-stricken, space-lost bulb.’ The lamp, in Crane’s vision, is not just the lighted chamber in some glowing interiors; it is the universe itself. In Lewis’s *MS*, Will Kennicott tells his wife that he does not like city life and compares his position in his small village with St. Paul, saying, ‘I feel I've got something to say about running Gopher Prairie,

---

[18]Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, Chapter 5 p.47
[19]Alan Paton, *Cry, the Beloved Country*, chapter 7. p.36 (Vintage)

but you take it in a big city of two-three hundred thousand, and I'm just one flea on the dog's back.'[20]

Critics have also stressed the fact that urban characters are so insignificant that their place in the world is rather ridiculous. In realist and naturalist fiction, dealing with the conflict between the rural and the urban environment, men in the city, to cite Tristram Hunt's article "The Country v the City" (in *The Guardian*) are 'the myriad atoms –the random, hurrying unconnected individuals of city life (…)'[21] He speaks here about the representation of individuals in the urban novels of Dickens, which also applies to our corpus novels. Vernon Louis Parrington's lecture notes on Naturalistic fiction, on the other hand, say that the individual in the city has the 'impulse to free creation' when real life is 'overshadowed and darkened by a sense of impotence; men are flies caught in the web of circumstance.'[22]

Jacob Riis, the slum reporter, is believed to have initiated the use of this image in writing. Of the crowd which wanders in city streets, he says 'the metropolis is to lots of people like a lighted candle to the moth. It attracts them in swarms that come year after year with the vague idea that they can get along here if anywhere.'[23]

Dreiser's *SC* is, however, the novel that contains the largest number of instances related to the urban individual's insignificance and abounds in images of the roaming

---

[20]Sinclair Lewis, *Main Street*, Chapter 2, p.17

[21]Tristram Hunt, "From Jane Austen to Zadie Smith – The City v the Country in Literature," Sat 12 March 2016 12.00 GMT, in <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/12/raymond-williams-the-country-and-the-city-rural-versus-urban>.

[22]Vernon Louis Parrington. 'Addenda', In *Main Currents in American Thought, An Interpretation of American Literature from the Beginnings to 1920 vol.3, The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America (1860-1920).* Norman & London: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1987 (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1930). 'A New Romance', paragraph 03 (point 02).

[23]Riis, Jacob. *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York*. 1890. Bedford Series in History and Culture. Ed. David Leviatin. Boston: Bedford Books, 1996.p.114.

mob, the mass of instinct-driven crowd which is attracted by the lighted chamber like small insects. The latter infest Chicago and New York and feed the city itself. Carrie feels she is a 'lone figure in a thoughtless sea,'[24] or a particle in an indifferent milieu.

Perhaps the most significant passage revealing this idea is the description of the state of Hurstwood as he moved from Chicago to New York:

> Whatever a man like Hurstwood could be in Chicago, it is very evident that he would be but an inconspicuous drop in an ocean like New York. In Chicago, whose population still ranged about 500,000, the Armours, Pullmans, Palmers, Fields had not yet arrived, as it were. Millionaires were not numerous. The rich had not become so conspicuously rich as to drown all moderate incomes in obscurity. The attention of the inhabitants was not so distracted by local celebrities in the dramatic, artistic, social and religious fields as to shut the well-positioned man from view. In Chicago the two roads to distinction were politics and trade. In New York the roads were any one of a half-hundred and each had been diligently pursued by hundreds, so that celebrities were numerous. The sea was already full of whales. A common fish must needs disappear wholly from view, remain unseen. In other words, Hurstwood was nothing.[25]

Hurstwood, now that he has lost his position in Chicago, is an 'inconspicuous drop' in a vast ocean, he is 'nothing', he is a 'common fish' in a sea of whales. The sharp contrast between Hurstwood's state in Chicago (the fast-growing city) and in New York (the giant metropolis) reflects Dreiser's position of man's place in a universe which is way too big for the weakest to survive.

[24]Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, Chapter 1, p.12
[25]Theodore Dreiser, *Ibid.*, Chapter 33, pp.304-5

The two characters referred to as moths in SC are Drouet and Hurstwood. Dreiser makes the link between their dreams –material-centred– and their lack of intellectual maturity, or incapacity to think. Hurstwood's saloon, Hannah and Hogg's, attracts moths in swarms. At night, 'come the moths in endless procession to bask in the light of the flame. Such conversation as one may hear would not warrant a commendation of the scene upon intellectual grounds.'[26] Drouet, on the other hand, is depicted as being more instinct-driven than his friend:

> Femininity affected his feelings. He was the creature of an inborn desire. (...) There would have been no speculation, no philosophizing. He had no mental process in him worthy the dignity of either of those terms. In his good clothes and fine health he was a merry, unthinking moth of the lamp. Deprived of his position and struck by a few of the involved and baffling forces which sometimes play upon man, he would have been as helpless as Carrie—as helpless, as non-understanding, as pitiable, if you will, as she.[27]

Dreiser's ambiguous message as to the condemnation of such attitude is revealed in the quote above. His non-judgemental tone reinforces the idea that man's desire is innate; it is ignited by the city's objects of desire. The author, still neutral in tone, does not put the blame on Drouet for his quest for pleasure:

> Evil was not in him. On the contrary there was kindliness, non-understanding, strong physical desire, vainglory, a great admiration for the sex, laughter, even tears, but at these no woman trembles. The moth, the pig, the clown, the butterfly, the actor, the

[26]Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit.*, p.46
[27]Theodore Dreiser, *Ibid.*, p.63

> business man and the sensualist mingled in combination. He was an enlivening spectacle of them all.[28]

Hurstwood, the other 'moth' of the flame, is careful enough not to be burnt. Ironically, his fall is precipitated as soon as he gets closer to the flame, that is, as soon as he starts his adulterous affair with Carrie. In fact, he cannot help it; it is beyond his control for he 'is the moth who knows all about his own feelings, all about the attraction of the flame, but who cannot bring himself to even wish to keep away. So much for the human conception of the natural forces which work in them.'[29]

In sum, the unthinking moths are associated with the image of the drifting movement, of being taken by the currents of life as illustrated by water imagery, the ebb and flow of life, the rocking-chair (Charles and Emma Bovary very often sit on their rocking-chair, just like Carrie and Hurstwood meditate on their rocking-chair), and the wheel -of fortune- referring to Emma 'Rouault' Bovary and George 'Wheeler' Hurstwood. The rocking-chair and the wheel (of fortune), both common to *SC* and *MB*, is nothing but the sombre picture of moths played with, back and forth, by a massive invisible force.

[28]Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit.*, p.64
[29]Theodore Dreiser, *Ibid.*, p.144.

B-The 'Not-so-Fallen' Woman: The Figure of the Prostitute in Naturalistic Urban Fiction

The theme of prostitution, especially in the city, as depicted in literature dates back to antiquity though one cannot address it in the same way as modern times literature. In fact, the reason why this theme was already recurrent in the past is its tight relation to the Biblical concept of the Fallen Woman. By the latter terms, one does not solely refer to the prostitute but also to any promiscuous woman, having different sexual affairs or leading adulterous relations. Examples of such women are countless in the whole body of world literatures. However, the literary current whose works of fiction feature the largest number of prostitutes is undoubtedly Naturalism. The Fallen Woman in naturalistic novels embodies the survival quest in a pitiless environment. Like all characters in naturalistic fiction, she falls under categories: the weakest, the fittest, and the one who goes with the flow and finds compromises with the surrounding milieu.

Since the novels under study bear an obvious imprint of the French Naturalists mentioned earlier on in this research work, it would be significant to examine the mutual influence that the naturalist writers have in terms of the theme of prostitution. The French Naturalists have particularly focused on this theme, mainly when depicting the fate of country women who go to the city. The brothers de Goncourt's *Sœur Philomène* (1861) is known to have influenced the writings of Joris-Karl Huysmans.

Indeed, in *Les Sœurs Vatard* (1879), the latter author adopts a "near to the Naturalist Ideal in its choice of subject matter", and "deals with realist subjects as the lives of prostitutes and the working-class,"[30] to cite critic Richard Griffiths. He adds, "If he is to be related at all to the Naturalists, his greatest affinity would seem to be with the Goncourts."[31] This influence can also be seen on Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*. Indeed, it would be interesting to examine the way in which Edmond and Jules de Goncourt's *Soeur Philomène* (1861), featuring a religious nurse in a medical milieu, may have influenced Huysmans' *Les Soeurs Vatard* (1879) and Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900), yet with an irony in the title of the latter. It can also be linked with Maupassant's *La Maison Tellier*, *Boule de Suif*, and all his other tales about prostitutes. Maupassant was particularly interested in such women of pleasure because they represented the city's weakest at first, before becoming the fittest.

This influence, however, is not confined within the frontiers of the Old Continent. It also crosses borders to relate to other literatures of the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century. For instance, Joris-Karl Huysmans' first novel, *Marthe, histoire d'une fille* (1876), depicting the tragic fate of a prostitute in Paris, can be paralleled with the Lebanese author Gibran Kahlil Gibran's 'Martha', in *Nymphs of the Valley*.[32] This short story deals with the miserable life of a poor teenage prostitute who flees her native countryside to find herself trapped in the city vices after a young man lures her in her hometown then leaves her to her fate with an illegitimate pregnancy. She eventually becomes a prostitute in the city of Beirut. Martha is

[30]Richard Griffiths, "Introduction." J.-K. Huysmans. *Parisian Sketches*. A translation of *Croquis Parisiens* (the 1886 edition). London: The Fortune Press, 1960 (1880). p.7.
[31]Richard Griffiths, *Ibid.*, p.8.
[32]Gibran Kahlil Gibran,'Martha.'In *Nymphs of the Valley*. Trans. by H. M. Nahmad, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948 (originally published in Arabic as *Araa'is Al Murooj*, 1906), pp.3-24.

portrayed as an idealist, as a weak soul. She collapses in the end and is literally dissolved by society. Gibran plays on the element of pathos and has empathy towards her in the same way Maupassant excuses the host of fallen women in his fiction.

To deal with the image and figure of the prostitute in the novels of the corpus implies a careful consideration of Zola's 'negative morality' or counter morality, especially in the city. Indeed, the author, just like many of his contemporaries, has suffered from labels of obscenity and lawsuits against his literary reports on adultery, misconduct and immorality**.** What the censoring authorities regulating literary publications at the time reproached him for (and many others before and after him, including Flaubert and Dreiser) was his non-judgemental scientific treatment of such themes that shocked the nineteenth-century readership.

Following the publication of *Thérèse Raquin (1867)*, Zola acknowledged that Adolphe Belot's and Ernest Daudet's *La Vénus de Gordes* (published in serials in *Le Figaro,* 1866) helped trigger his imagination and realise his dream of creating a story inspired by a psychological and physiological case. His short story *Un Mariage d'amour* (published in December 1866, in *Le Figaro*) reflects much of the plot and the narrative art of the novel he admitted had influenced him.[33] In his novels, there are hosts of prostitutes serving different functions. Gervaise, in *L'Assommoir* (1877), and her daughter *Nana* are perfect examples of that.

The choice of this section's title, 'The Not-so-Fallen Woman', translates the idea that, first, in a naturalistic urban setting, the individual has power over their fate.

[33] *See* Robert Abirached in Emile Zola. *Thérèse Raquin*. 1867. "Dossier" (after-text file), "Notice". Paris: Gallimard, 2014 (2001, 1979) p.309.

Therefore, prostitution for the female characters in the corpus novels is *not* a choice. The hereditary/environmental/social determinist element plays a major role in these heroines' forced inclination towards pleasure-selling. Such examples are Maupassant's Boule de Suif, Zola's Gervaise and Nana, Crane's Maggie, Ekwensi's Jagua, Ngugi's Wanja, Paton's Gertrude, and Sinclair's Mariya.

The view of the prostitute in naturalist literature differs from one author to another in terms of individual features, yet it is quite similar when related to a more generally Darwinian urban setting. She is seen as the weak (the defeated, the unfit), as the strong (the winner, the fittest), as the influential/negotiator, the wise, the powerful, the dreamer/idealist, and the reformer (social, political, and economic reformer). A contrast needs to be mentioned here with the oriental, traditional conservative view of the prostitute by society, as well as the representation of the prostitute in English literature (which, in general, is traditionally looked down upon, is condemned by society, and is ostracised).

In our treatment of the image of the Prostitute in American Literature (Maggie in *Maggie*, and Marija in *The Jungle*) and that of the Prostitute in African Literature (Jagua *JN*, Wanja *PB*, and Gertrude *CBC*), reference will be made to the portrayal of the Prostitute in French Literature, mainly to Zola's Gervaise, Nana, and some of Maupassant's fallen women. Reference will also be made to N. Frye's & B. Macpherson's *Biblical and Classical Myths, The Mythological Framework of Western Culture*, more specifically, to the chapter entitled "The Great Whore and the Forgiven Harlot."

There are two categories of fallen women in a naturalist context: the weakest and the fittest (the biblical ‘forgiven harlot’ concept, or the Maria Magdalena figure). The fallen woman as the fittest both in the country and the city (African Literature) is a powerful social and political actor. In the African corpus, mainly in *PB* and *JN*, the prostitute is forgiven. The fallen woman even takes the distinguished role of a teacher. She has the ability to moralise, to give comments on philosophy, to reflect on political matters and take part in solving them, and even to take on the significant function of a negotiator, capable of bringing solutions to serious issues growing into internal, internecine tribal conflicts. In this sense, she is given power.

In *JN*, Jagua convinces Chief Ofubara to stop the conflict and reach a peace agreement between the two life-long enemy tribes: Bagana & Krinameh. In *PB*, Wanja participates in the Nairobi journey to protest against the industrialisation, urbanisation and exploitation of Ilmorog; she also kills Kimeria without being noticed. Both Jagua and Wanja use their power to participate in the political life of their country- Nigeria and Kenya- and they try to improve the living conditions of their fellowmen. Both are active –Jagua in Lagos and the countryside (Bagana, Krinameh, Ogabu), and Wanja in the village of Ilmorog and in Nairobi. Ekwensi and Ngugi put forward the biblical image of the ‘forgiven harlot’ through their major female characters, namely Jagua and Wanja.

First, the fallen woman is seen as a defeated individual and a drifting soul: the weakest both in the country and the city, in African Literature. In *CBC*, Paton portrays Gertrude in such a way as to suggest that she is literally crushed by the huge impact of the metropolis, Johannesburg. She is painted as a drifting soul whose case is ultimately

desperate. In *CBC*, Stephen Kumalo tries to do to help his 'lost' younger sister go back to the right path. He finally thinks, at the very end, before deciding to go back to Natal, that her soul is now 'lost' for good in the City, as he overhears her daring laughters with men, in one of the rooms.

Second, the fallen woman is seen as a defeated individual and a drifting soul: the weakest both in the country and the city in American Literature. The fallen woman in the American corpus is definitely the weakest for two major reasons, the first being her gender and the second being the force exercised on her by the place she dwells in, that is, the huge city (metropolitan environmental pressure). Here, there is the element of determinism and Darwinian philosophy. In *Maggie* and *The Jungle*, she is characterised by her weakness and her psychological and emotional fragility, as seen in both Maggie and Marija. Marija recalls the biblical parable -typological allegory- of Mariah Magdalena, that is, the 'forgiven harlot'. Yet, neither Sinclair's Marija nor Crane's Maggie have the power of their African counterparts, Jagua and Wanja. There are many passages illustrating how Maggie and Marija surrender to the all-too powerful and imposing metropolis and how they turn to prostitution as the ultimate way 'out'.

Zola's Fallen Woman is both the weakest and the fittest (as is the case of Nana). It would be very interesting to compare Nana and her mother Gervaise in *L'Assommoir*. They represent different types of fallen women. Nana seems to have developed survival instinct through the experience she had lived with her family. Though she had been introduced to the adult world in her early teens (at the age of

thirteen), she could manage to escape her family's misery, yet to fall into another type of misery awaiting her.

There is an obvious parallel between Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana* and Zola's *Nana*, as previously mentioned in chapter one, and a less obvious yet perceptible link between Crane's *Maggie* and Zola's *Nana*. Nana gradually moves from fame and power to the abyss. She experiences in the city both the positions/lives of the fittest and the weakest, both triggered by the oppressive metropolitan influence. Zola's fallen woman is not the biblical 'forgiven harlot'. A good example of this is that Zola's Nana is featured in her gradual downfall, closely related to the biological -or hereditary-, environmental, and social deterministic powers dooming her to a desperate fate. A good point of analysis would be to compare Gibran Khalil Gibran's 'Martha from Ban', in *The Nymphs of the Valley* ('Ara'is Al Murooj') (1906- date of original publication in Arabic and 1948 date of publication of the translated English version, New York, Alfred A. Knopf). How Martha turns to prostitution due to massive environmental and social deterministic powers is determined by her background playing largely against her –mainly in the countryside, first, and later in the city.

The biblical image/concept of the 'forgiven harlot', or the Mariah Magdalena figure,' and the typological allegory in both the African corpus and the American corpus is present. The notion of 'sanctus lacrimae', or the sacred tears (tears of soul purification), and the idea/theme of morality (expressed mainly via the feeling of regret) through the parable of Mariah Magdalena is important to highlight.

The Fallen Woman also stands for a powerful symbol in African literature. Beyond the gender and social status of the prostitute character in African literature, precisely in the African corpus, there lies a multi-dimensional symbol. At a macro level, the fallen woman stands for colonial and postcolonial/neo-colonial Africa. The idea of prostitution being itself representative of violation by force, the fallen woman as depicted in the African corpus under study conveys the much broader idea/theme of African land intrusion by force/rape. At a micro level, the prostitute epitomises wisdom. She is indeed the teacher of the community; ironically enough, she is also the community's moraliser. She has power, charisma and a strong character; for this reason, she is portrayed as a convincing character, one whom people turn to for advice.

The Prostitute is also seen as a teacher, almost an instructor. Wisdom comes out of the mouth of a fallen woman. Such is the case of Jagua, Wanja who kills Kimeria, and Marija who works for survival sake, out of a feeling of responsibility towards her family. Gertrude and Maggie, on the other hand, are drifted by the urban current; they surrender to its force.

Prostitutes tend to comment on and contribute to politics. They lead a philosophical discourse. One may mention Wanja, Jagua, Zola's Nana, and Maupassant's Boule de Suif as concrete examples. However, Wanja and Jagua remain the best illustration of this point. Jagua brings peace to two conflicting rival villages (Bagana & Krinameh), putting thus a limit to what was to become a tribal war. She was quite convincing with Chief Ofubara, who, under her physical charms, surrendered to her call for reconciliation. Jagua acquired thus power through the role of the reconciliatory and negotiator. She gets involved in politics with Uncle Taiwo

(especially during the elections opposing OP1 & OP2) and she has a good number of connections in the civil service institutions that she wanted to have recourse to in order to provide Freddie with a passport and a scholarship to England.

It is yet important to mention the fact that prostitutes are given power in African literature mainly by male writers, which leads some female and feminist critics to point at the idea of objectification of women. As a symbol of Mother Africa, which is 'raped'/colonised by intruders, but which at the end recovers its power, the African writers reveal the traditional metaphor of land as a woman (a mother, motherland).

The Prostitute is also a 'débrouillard' (to use Nazanine Homaifar's words), or a fighter, rather than a victim. Contrary to the prostitute of the American corpus (and to Zola' prostitute), who is more a victim of the environment (natural, social, biological), the prostitute in African literature is a strong woman with a striking capacity to overcome life –mainly city life– difficulties and to survive as the milieu's most powerful fittest.

C-The Idealist: The Impossible Dreamer and the Pragmatic Dreamer, between Bovarysm and Alienation

The relationship between the individual and his/her environment –be it natural, rural, or urban– is among the most significant themes in naturalistic writings. This relationship is based on how the individual is determined by this environment, and thus a close attention is paid to the material factor, as well as the mental process resulting from this interaction. From the psychoanalytical point of view, there are two states of mind worth mentioning: boredom or ennui, very often linked to the notion of Bovarysm, and alienation. The two states have, in general, a relationship of causality since the former either leads to the latter when there is a shift in milieu from the countryside to the metropolis, or it can develop into Bovarysm within the same rural milieu, given certain social conditions.

The first psychological process or state of mind, 'ennui' or boredom, is tightly linked to what the literary critics call Bovarysm[34]. This feeling is frequently observed and is inherent mainly in the petty bourgeois class, whether in the province or in the metropolis. It is also typical of female characters, in general mainly those who are idealists or impossible dreamers. This feeling can be either overwhelming, and even tragic, when it leads the female character straight to her downfall (Emma Bovary *MB*, Mathilde Loisel *LP*), or it can be the impetus for the character's own success if it is mastered and made into an asset by her (Carrie Meeber *SC*, Carol Kennicott *MS*).

[34]Bovarysm : from Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857). A tendency toward escapist daydreaming in which the dreamer imagines himself or herself to be a hero or heroine in a romance. Madame Bovary suffered from such a condition. J.A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*.p.95. London: Penguin, 1998 (1976).

This feeling of boredom, according to Thorstein Veblen in his *Theory of the Leisure Class* (in which he develops key concepts such as 'conspicuous leisure' and 'conspicuous consumption'), is perceived differently by the urban aristocracy. It is rather a fashion to show one's abundance in time, and mainly one's idleness in free time, in order to affirm one's position in the higher society (Julia Hurstwood, Mrs. Vance). Boredom or ennui here, therefore, stands as a sine qua non social standard that reinforces one's 'etiquette.'

Boredom, or ennui, though by nature inherent, may be reinforced or made more acute by some specific events, generally, a social event, aggravating the feeling of 'malaise', or the constant feeling of being ill-at-ease, a feeling that very often turns from a psychological state to a physical state namely the permanent belief of being sick and the constant and rather vital need to go elsewhere for health improvement.

For Emma Bovary, the ball at the La Vaubyessard château, on an invitation from the Marquis d'Andervilliers in person, becomes a reference date in her life. That Wednesday when she could 'see and be seen' turns out to have the value of another birthday, a day of regeneration from the abyss that the dullness of her life with Charles was drawing her deep into. The more remote that Wednesday goes in time, the more depressed she feels, to the extent of being physically sick.[35] Adding to her failed extra-marital affairs with Leon and Rodolphe, Emma drowns her dreams in arsenic. Emma's replica would take shape in Zola's Thérèse Raquin in the eponymous novel. She too feels stranded in her aunt's small house, in a narrow Parisian street, where she has to endure a commonplace routine life with her husband Camille, who is also her cousin,

[35]Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*. Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions, 2001 (1994). See Part One, the last page of chapter 7, and the entire chapter 8.

and bear the stifling, constant smells of the medicine his fragile health compels him to bear. Her ennui will throw her in her husband's friend's arms, Laurent, and together they will plan for the murder of the former in order to have a 'brighter' life. The murder will ironically break their union instead of binding them, and they both decide to get rid of the corpse's omnipresent image with a gulp of poison each of them takes.

To better understand a literary character's state of boredom, thus, a full grasp of Emma's ennui in the novel is necessary. Roger Clark defines what causes Charles Bovary's stifling but also Emma's long-lasting ennui and eventually tragic fate:

> School and university, the Bovary family and the marriage to the ill-named Héloïse are all institutions that constrain and paralyse the individual (the young Charles Bovary) who finds himself caught up in them. And these are precisely the elements (mediocrity, complacency, sterility, routine, boredom) that will also characterise the social, intellectual and institutional contexts that Emma Rouault (the name, echoing French *roue* [wheel], has clear connotations of circularity and repetition), later Madame Bovary, will come to inhabit. Her struggle with them and her eventual defeat by them will provide the principal matter of the plot of Flaubert's novel.[36]

Gradually, these elements transform her ennui from a constant feeling to a permanent state reaching a psychopathological level, following her physiological reaction to the dullness of her life, namely a nervous breakdown necessitating a change of milieu. She attains a state where her ideals collide violently with the dead-end life in which she gets entangled; her dreams, therefore, become paralysed, and paralysing. The

[36]Roger Clark, 'Introduction' in *Madame Bovary*, Gustave Flaubert, Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions, 2001 (1994).pp.v-xx. p.ix.

repetitious mechanical routine aspect of her life suggested by the word ‘wheel’ –as stated by Clark– in her last name (ironically, in her father’s name and not her husband’s, which implies the fact that she was born with that fate and doomed to live that life, and which stresses here the hereditary determinist factor, preceding the environmental one) also refers to the ‘ebb and flow’ of life that drifts the individual and that characterises most naturalistic texts. The novel’s most significant passages in relation to Emma’s boredom are found in chapters seven and eight of part one. The chapters preceding these two describe the dullness of her life and her growing dissatisfaction then disillusion with it; the chapters following these two depict her gradual psychological degradation and her tragic end. There seems to be, accordingly, only a very short moment in the life of Emma in which she really *lived*, that is, the ball at the château de La Vaubyessard. Prior to this event, she was gradually stifling, and after it, she literally died, self-consumed by her dystopian dreams and her disillusionment with ‘the prestige that was traditionally associated with the country doctor.’[37] There is a sharp contrast between the end of chapter seven when ‘towards the end of September something extraordinary fell upon her life; she was invited by the Marquis d'Andervilliers to Vaubyessard’[38] and the end of chapter eight when ‘Her journey to Vaubyessard had made a hole in her life, like one of those great crevices that a storm will sometimes make in one night in mountains’[39]. Between these two moments in her life, there is the ball, to which the whole of chapter eight is devoted. Emma’s *life* is reduced to a single chapter. She was so marked by the event that ‘The

[37]Roger Clark, *Op.cit.*, p.x.
[38]Gustave Flaubert. *Op.cit.* Part one, chapter 7, p.38.
[39]Gustave Flaubert. *Op.cit.*. Part one, Chapter 8, p.48.

memory of this ball, then, became an occupation'[40] for her. This idea of disenchantment following the ball is reinforced by the fact that 'At the end of some indefinite distance there was always a confused spot, into which her dream died.'[41] She is, therefore, doomed to fail and her lure comes from the essence of her own impossible dreams.

Flaubert's Emma Bovary, as a major literary female character, laid the ground for the delineation of other writers' characters' emotions, behaviour and attitudes during the same period. Hence, it is under the influence of Flaubert's realism and Zola's naturalism that Maupassant wrote most of his short fiction. Thus, very much like Emma Bovary, Mathilde Loisel, a dreamer par excellence, has the only life chance to shine during the evening ceremony she and her husband have been invited to in person by the Minister of Public Instruction (National Education) and Mrs. Georges Ramponneau, at the Minister's hotel. However, the opening paragraphs of the novella are quite telling about her fate. The reader is given an indication concerning her future right from the beginning: she is not made for the dull marital life she leads with a simple employee; she is a 'plant', a flower that is doomed not to bloom on the sterile soil she has been planted into. In other words, her dreams of a refined life are incompatible with her modest milieu. They lead her straight to her tragic fall. But unlike Emma, who succumbs gradually to the overwhelming feeling of boredom which became a permanent mental state, Mathilde is so suddenly shocked by the devastating news of her couple's bankruptcy in order to pay back her friend for the lost

[40]*Idem.*
[41]Gustave Flaubert. *Ibid*., Part one, Chapter 9, p.49.

necklace she borrowed from her that she does not even have the time to feel that ennui. Ironically, the lifetime event which is supposed to bring her out to light, to make her remembered in the ball's guests' minds, makes her disappear and retreat in darkness for good; it even deprives her of all sense of humanity, reducing her to a dehumanised automat working during long years to reimburse her friend –for a fake necklace. The psychological impact of the tragic discovery that she has lost the necklace on the very evening of the ball is oppressive. It makes her former dreams, her longing for a luxurious life, and her feeling of boredom look quite flimsy.

Theodore Dreiser, as previously stated in Chapter One, was a great reader of Maupassant. The amount of books written by the French naturalist in the personal library of the American author comes as a testimony of a possible admiration of the latter for the former. Dreiser's and Maupassant's naturalisms share many common points, the most important of which is the prevailing ironic tone, very often akin to sarcasm that both authors adopt when dealing with their major characters. Flaubert's Emma's sweet memory of the ball at La Vaubyessard château makes her ennui more acute, a fact that consumes her and kills her. The 'mal-être' of Zola's Thérèse leads her to adultery, murder, and ultimately suicide. Maupassant's Mathilde's last ball fatally puts an end to both her reveries and her boredom, bringing her to the tragic epiphany of doomed poverty –ironically, reminding much of Cinderella's post-midnight destitution, yet with a reversed unpolished ending. Dreiser's Carrie, however, survives, relatively successfully, her dreams and this feeling of boredom.

This is not due solely to the 'favouring' urban milieu (Chicago and New York) -since this same environment is fatal for individuals like Hurstwood- that Carrie

somewhat overcomes such a deep feeling of ill-being. She too, like Emma, comes from the countryside. The difference is that Carrie takes her dreams with her to the city to make them concrete while Emma remains stranded in the province, imprisoned in her own dreams of which she cannot be disentangled. Emma, the Mid-Nineteenth Century woman, is also confined in a community regulated by strict social codes. Even if she tries to free herself from such social ties and her plain marriage by engaging into adulterous love affairs, she does not seem to be able to take decisive actions to change her routine life, with the exception perhaps of her own decision to commit suicide. Carrie, the turn-of-century woman, is free, liberal, and to some extent even audacious although, for her creator, she had 'neither guile nor rapacity.'[42] She breaks the social codes easily, without hesitation. Though she is portrayed as someone who, in her rocking-chair, constantly ponders over her acts –once done– and wonders about whether she is satisfied or not by her new life each time she climbs to a higher social level, she resolutely gets rid of all the obstacles on her way to social success. She too, during her dusk promenades in Chicago with Mrs. Hale, lingers at the sight of street lamps and enlightened rich interiors, wishing she could one day be among them, and one of them. Like Emma (and like Mathilde Loisel), she has as a reference a social event as well: her dinner at Sherry's in Fifth Avenue, New York. It is true that the event makes more acute her gradual feeling of boredom with the lustreless life Hurstwood was drawing her to. However, she takes action to make her dreams come true. As a Mid-Western provincial, she goes with bravery to the big metropolis, which is completely unknown to her. She stifles in the conservative Victorian codes of her

[42]Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, Introduction & Notes by Herbert Leibowitz. New York: Barnes & Noble, 2005 (Doubleday, 1900; Pennsylvania Penguin, 1981). Chapter 13, p.138. This edition is a digital version of the Perennial Classics paperback edition referred to in earlier instances of this research work.

poor family in Wisconsin and of her elder sister Minnie's household in Chicago; yet, she manages to breathe in again by seeking her own independence. One may say that her historical context and that of Emma are different; about forty years separate both stories. In addition, the milieu in which both women evolve is different, for Emma remains in the province, where little can be offered in terms of 'dreams,' while Carrie goes to the city, which is far more generous in terms of opportunities. Emma, in a way, saw her dreams of Paris suspended; they remained mere visions in her mind, fuelling her metropolitan fantasies, and sheer words she whispered as her fingers travelled on the map of the French capital. Furthermore, very little, if at all, is suggested about Carrie's education while Emma is described as someone who has benefited from conventional learning. However, the power to take decisions and to implement them comes from within. Though Emma also stifles in the strict Catholic community she lives in, she seems to lack Carrie's American post-bellum pragmatism. Both are dreamers who read books, but while Emma's readings pull her down the pit, Carrie's – under the guidance of Bob Ames– allow her to put into question her own satisfaction and, therefore, to reconsider her own dreams. Carrie does not nourish her dreams with romantic readings, nor does she live in the stories of her books. She reads what is recommended for her by other people, mainly intellectuals. She is, by all standards, an avid consumer of goods but also of ideas. Emma, on the other hand, seems obstinate to be the heroine of her own stories. One can say that Emma, as a tragic heroine, is a failed idealist while Carrie is a pragmatic idealist.

However, despite the fact that Carrie is a pragmatic idealist, a turn-of-century utilitarian consumerist, she experiences a final disillusion at the very end of the novel,

which manifests itself as a lack of satisfaction when she ponders over her economic success, sitting on her quite symbolic and omnipresent rocking-chair, moving backward and forward as the ebb and flow of life drifts her:

> Sitting alone, she was now an illustration of the devious ways by which one who feels, rather than reasons, may be led in the pursuit of beauty. Though often disillusioned, she was still waiting for that halcyon day when she should be led forth among dreams become real. Ames had pointed out a farther step, but on and on beyond that, if accomplished, would lie others for her. It was forever to be the pursuit of that radiance of delight which tints the distant hilltops of the world.
>
> Oh, Carrie, Carrie! Oh, blind strivings of the human heart! Onward, onward, it saith, and where beauty leads, there it follows. Whether it be the tinkle of a lone sheep bell o'er some quiet landscape, or the glimmer of beauty in sylvan places, or the show of soul in some passing eye, the heart knows and makes answer, following. It is when the feet weary and hope seems vain that the heartaches and the longings arise. Know, then, that for you is neither surfeit nor content. In your rocking-chair, by your window dreaming, shall you long, alone. In your rocking chair, by your window, shall you dream such happiness as you may never feel.[43]

This passage does not figure in Dreiser's first uncensored copy of *SC* and was obviously added for morality reasons after the fierce criticism he eventually had to face, following the publication of his controversial first novel. What is worth mentioning here is the parallel one can make between Emma and Carrie in relation to this idea of cyclical boredom, the ebb and flow of invisible agents controlling

[43]Theodore Dreiser, *Op.cit.*, Chapter 47 (last chapter): 'The Way of the Beaten: A Harp in the Wind.' p.467.

characters' lives. If Roger Clark has pointed at the influential link between Balzac and Flaubert in this regard, an interesting influential link between Dreiser and Flaubert can be easily made here as well:

> And these are precisely the elements (mediocrity, complacency, sterility, routine, boredom) that will also characterise the social, intellectual and institutional contexts that Emma Rouault (the name, echoing French *roue* [wheel], has clear connotations of circularity and repetition), later Madame Bovary, will come to inhabit.[44]

Roger Clark pointedly relates the meaning of Emma's last name 'Rouault' to the French word 'roue', or wheel, referring thus to the interminable cycle of a series of events designed by forces constantly conspiring against the individual. The rocking chair in both novels is the most significant signal of the ebb and flow of life whereby the main characters (Hurstwood and Carrie, Charles and Emma) go adrift. Yet, this back and forth movement of life forces, this drifting is hinted at in *SC* in the last name Hurstwood chooses for himself and Carrie as a married couple, in New York. He changes his name to Mr. Wheeler, and thus Carrie becomes Mrs. Wheeler. The word 'wheel' is used to refer to the couple in New York, the vast ocean whose waves take the small atoms adrift, the turbulent sea that *carries* Carrie away. Perhaps without knowing it, Carrie Wheeler is played with by the city's mighty hands and stifled by its tentacles. The resonance of Flaubert's key work is, therefore, quite strong in Dreiser's novel.

[44]Roger Clark, *Op.cit.*, p.ix.

Sinclair Lewis's Carol Milford Kennicott presents many traits Dreiser's Caroline Meeber, or Carrie, has. Just like Carrie, who is from the Midwest (Wisconsin), Carol comes from the Midwestern state of Minnesota. Not only does she have the same first name but she also shows the same attitude in specific contexts. And both draw on Emma Bovary, as stated earlier on, in what concerns some personality features. They are dreamers whose idealism remains unquenched at the end, with the epiphanic moment revealing an acute lack of satisfaction with the deeds they had accomplished so far. Dreiser's influence on Lewis can be clearly seen in the latter's own statement, taken from "The American Fear of Literature" (1930), in homage to the former:

> Now to me, as to many other American writers, Dreiser more than any other man, marching alone, usually unappreciated, often hated, has cleared the trail from Victorian and Howellsian timidity and gentility in American fiction to honesty and boldness and passion of life.[45]

This admiration of Lewis for Dreiser is transparent in his depiction of his heroine's feeling and state of boredom. Like Carrie, Lewis's Carol Milford Kennicott's ennui reminds us much of Emma's, Thérèse's, and Mathilde's. Among the most significant passages illustrating her feeling of confinement in a new life she suddenly embarks on and seems already to regret is that which shows Carol boarding the train and leaving for Gopher Prairie as a newly-wed, a passage which is strikingly similar to the one portraying Emma Bovary's arrival at her in-laws' village on the day of her marriage. At least thematically, the idea of the Country Doctor, which is

[45]Theodore Dreiser. *Op.cit*., p.477

recurrent in world literature (the most noteworthy works of fiction bearing the 'Country Doctor' title are Kafka's short story, and both Jewett's and Balzac's novels), is dealt with in *MB* and *MS* in more or less the same way. Roger Clark traces back *MB* to Balzac's *Le Médecin de campagne* arguing that 'there is certainly no doubt that the novel's [*MB*] subtitle (*Provincial Manners*) has to it a profoundly Balzacian resonance and that it should be read as a tribute to the author of the *Human Comedy*.'[46] The character of the country doctor is portrayed as a relatively common man, an individual with little motivation, down-to-earth ambition, and limited intelligence –though it is clear in both novels that Charles Bovary and Will Kennicott, despite benefitting from some kind of respect of the small communities they live in and try to serve, are victims of environmental forces inhibiting their individual initiatives and actions, to the extent of hampering their intellectual or mental development. It would be interesting to contrast such naturalistic representation of the country doctor character as an individual of relatively little importance in his milieu with Mark Storey's study of such concept in relation to the more general theme of the benefits of country doctors in the transition from traditional rural life to modern urban life. Indeed, his progressive view, which is in its essence objective, shows us the rather optimistic picture of a man serving his community when the industrial capitalist system was intruding upon the ways of the countryside. For him, and as depicted in selected texts from Gilded Age and regional literature, the country doctor is an important element through whom aspects of modernity –scientific and medical advent, here- can be smoothly integrated

[46]Roger Clark, *Op.cit.*, p.vi

in the long traditional agrarian community.[47] This, however, does not come in support of our main theme, namely the parallel country-city or province-metropolis, but as a complementary observation, since Storey considers these two elements as two parts of a whole; they are both reconciliatory rather than forming an alienating equation.

It would be impossible to deal with the theme of boredom or ennui without mentioning its most prominent philosopher: Arthur Schopenhauer. In his seminal works *Parerga and Paralipomena; Aphorisms on Wisdom for Life* and *The World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer offers a detailed account of the phenomenon of boredom in life, relating it to desire, pain, and happiness:

> 'That human existence must be a kind of mistake emerges sufficiently from the simple observation that the human being is a concretion of needs whose satisfaction, difficult as it is to achieve, provides him with nothing more than a painless state in which he is still abandoned to boredom, which simply proves that existence in itself has no value, for boredom is precisely the sensation of the emptiness of existence.'[48]

The individual's feeling that life is valueless is not only engendered by a temporary feeling of boredom but is the trigger to a permanent state of boredom generated by a realisation that existence, or life, is purposeless. Lars Svendsen, in *A Philosophy of Boredom*, gives further explanation of this feeling that affects both genders in modern times. For him, boredom, though seemingly 'trivial' in the sense that it is not like

[47]Mark Storey. *Rural Fictions, Urban Realities: A Geography of Gilded Age American Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013

[48]Arthur Schopenhauer (*The World as Will*, p.259) (Also in his *Aphorisms*) Cited in Christopher Janaway, 'Introduction', pp.xxix-xxx. Arthur Schopenhauer. *Parerga and Paralipomena, Short Philosophical Essays, Vol.2*. Adrian del Caro & Christopher Janaway (eds. trans.). 'Introduction,' by Christopher Janaway. Cambridge, UK : Cambridge University Press, 2015.

depression or melancholy, remains a serious psychological issue for the individual as it apparently does not have a remedy once it is felt. He categorises boredom, with reference to Flaubert, into situative boredom (or common boredom, 'l'ennui commun') and existential boredom (or modern boredom, 'l'ennui moderne'). He claims that both states have different symbolic modes of expression: the former is physical, and the latter is psychological:

> We can note the fact that situative and existential boredom have different symbolic modes of expression, or rather: While situative boredom is expressed via yawning, wriggling in one's chair, stretching out one's arms and legs, etc., profound existential boredom is more of less devoid of expression. While the body language of situative boredom seems to signal that one can cast off this yoke, squirm oneself free and move on, it is as if the lack of expression in existential bore-(p.42) dom contains an implicit instinct that it cannot be overcome by any act of will.(p.43)[49]

Citing as an example Emma Bovary, Svendsen explains that the key difference between the two categories of ennui lies in the fact that situative ennui is object-related –and so it is easily discernible– while existential ennui is desire-related –which makes it more global and, thus, less obviously perceptible and less easily 'curable':

> The boredom experienced by Emma Bovary, on the other hand, seems to be more of the 'modern' kind, even though her boredom is also object-related via the imaginary object she attempts to realize sexually. A way of distinguishing between situative and existential boredom would be to say that while

[49]Lars Svendsen. *A Philosophy of Boredom*. Trans. by John Irons. London : Reaktion Books, 2005. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1999). pp.42-3.

> situative boredom contains a longing for something that is desired, existential boredom contains a longing for any desire at all. p.42[50]

The common phenomenon of boredom is also environment-related. If this feeling is born in the countryside, out of a dull routine, it is in most cases taken to the city where it is perpetuated and made more acute since the metropolis offers more opportunities of gain and, thus, more risks of being entangled in the vicious circle of desire-gain-dissatisfaction-ennui-more desire, and so goes the chain.

In terms of dreams killed by boredom, the influence of *Madame Bovary*, *Thérèse Raquin*, and 'The Necklace' on *SC* and *MS* is obvious. Carrie's dream is Mathilde's dream; they are both dreams of the material. Emma's and Thérèse's dreams are materialistic but linked to emotions (they have emotionalised desires). The feeling of attachment to ephemeral things is more inclined to engender the feeling of boredom, which translates a feeling of permanent lack. Carol's dream is different; she is a reformer and a non-conformist to social codes and small town conservatism. Her feeling of boredom comes from the stifling routine of the dull life of the Prairie and her failure to bring durable changes to the tightly-knit community, which she considers as impermeable to change with its people's reluctance and distrust towards any novelty.

The other psychological phenomenon worth mentioning is alienation. This state is even more serious to the individual, and can actually be considered as the direct result of boredom. Whether it is the provincial who goes to the city, or the native

[50]Lars Svendsen. *Op.cit*. On modern boredom (ennui, idleness), see also Barbara Dalle Pezze & Carlo Salzani (eds.). *Essays on Boredom and Modernity*. Amsterdam and New York, N.Y.: Rodopi, 2009.

African or the immigrant who goes to the post-colonial city/gigantic metropolis, the characters undergo this feeling. It is an inevitable, and rather natural, psychological process generated by a sudden impression of estrangement or defamiliarisation, due to the change of milieu (we will refer, to support this point, to Fanon's *BSWM* and K. Haavik's 'Zola's Postcolonial City'). Fredric Jameson qualifies this state as akin to schizophrenia, though he puts it in the postmodern capitalist urban context. It is quite valid when it concerns the urban milieu in general. This process, affecting both male and female individuals, is generally at the source of a split personality, a loss of identity, and a loss of the sense of belonging. Alienation is often associated to –and triggered by– an inferiority complex, very often born out of self-consciousness, and concerns mainly individuals who are not 'well-off.' Such cases are Wanja, Clara, Jagua, and Gertrude.

Raymond Williams points at this feeling of isolation and alienation engendered by the city's atmosphere and related to the notion of strangeness and even mystery, in modernist literature:

> Closely related to this first theme of the crowd of strangers is a second major theme, of an individual lonely and isolated within the crowd. We can note some continuity in each theme from more general Romantic motifs: the general apprehension of mystery and of extreme and precarious forms of consciousness; the intensity of a paradoxical self-realisation in isolation. But what has happened, in each case, is that an apparently objective milieu, for each of these conditions, has been identified in the newly expanding and overcrowded modern city.[51]

[51]Raymond Williams, 'The Metropolis and the Emergence of Modernism', in Peter Brooker, (ed.), *Modernism/Postmodernism*, p.86.

In other words, concerning modernism, the urban alienation that characters undergo is a continuation of some romantic themes in relation to the city, its mystery and the man who feels quite an alien, as noted in the writings of Edgar Allan Poe. The notion of alienation appeared in earlier romantic writings with the notion of the 'misunderstood hero', generally the main character, who withdraws from a society that does not understand his feelings and attraction to natural spaces. The latter indeed feels he is in harmony with such silent and serene places as mountains and forests. Peter Brooker explains Fredric Jameson's almost similar view on the individual's alienation engendered by Capitalism, in the later postmodernist context:

> He (Fredric Jameson) describes postmodernism as a 'cultural dominant'; the combined result of a reaction to institutionalized modernism and of a decisive shift from monopoly to multinational Capitalism. This faceless expansion of the global market and the accompanying development of electronic media has penetrated all levels of existence, says Jameson, producing a massively coded world of relentless commodification and dramatically altered social and psychic conditions. (…) The individual, formerly alienated under monopoly capitalism, now becomes 'schizophrenic', all sense even of lost authenticity gone.[52]

Jameson's view of the effect of Capitalism –and thus, the city, since it is its centre– on the individual is even more accentuated by the postmodernist context. Indeed, if in modernist terms the individual is alienated, in postmodernist terms he is totally

[52]Peter Brooker, (ed.), *Modernism/Postmodernism*, Introduction, pp.21-22.

dehumanised and ‘schizophrenic’ in the sense that he has lost even his own identity; he no more knows who he really is.

In relation to this study of our characters, both in the province and the metropolis, it is apposite to mention Frantz Fanon’s psychoanalytical account and interpretation of colonialism’s trauma on the colonised in his *Black Skin White Masks*. The essence of this work is contained in two chapters that we will refer to. Indeed, his extensive writings on the inferiority complex and alienation enlighten us about both the behaviours and the reactions of our characters.

Close to Fanon’s study of the effects of colonisation on the colonised and his writings on alienation is the 1960s psychoanalytical trauma theory, whereby an individual’s actions are examined in relation to some event that might have deeply marked them. Hence, cultural trauma theory may also help understand our authors’ characters since the African novels under study are set either in a colonial or in a postcolonial context. This would all the more be true given the fact that many critics and theorists, notably Irene Visser[53], have tried to explain the ways in which the trauma theory could serve postcolonial literary criticism. Susan Rubin Suleiman[54] explains, in the light of Judith Herman’s scientific findings on trauma theory, that an individual’s psychological and neurological reaction to a traumatic event –here, the period of colonisation and its aftermath are, themselves, a massive traumatic event at large– is quite akin to what we label alienation since they respond by using mechanisms like ‘psychological numbing, or shutting down of normal emotional

[53]Irene Visser, ‘Trauma Theory and Postcolonial Literary Studies’, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, Vol.47, 2011, Issue 3, pp.270-282; ‘Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospects’, *Humanities* 2015, 4, pp.250-265

[54]Susan Rubin Suleiman, ‘Judith Herman and Contemporary Trauma Theory’, *WSQ: Women’s Studies Quarterly*, Vol.36, Numbers 1&2, Spring/Summer 2008, pp.276-281

responses.'[55] In a way, the individual is in a state of emotional paralysis, leading to a systematic apathetic way of acting, because a traumatic event 'overwhelm[s] the ordinary human adaptations to life.'[56]

The post-trauma effects on the individual living in the postcolonial or neo-colonial context are devastating. Perhaps the best example of individual cultural alienation as reflected by the characters of our corpus is Achebe's Obi Okonkwo. He embodies the living result of the collision between tradition and modernity in the psyche of a formerly-colonised native African. He can be considered as the anti-hero of a modern Nigerian tragedy.

From the very beginning of the novel, Achebe makes it clear that Obi is a modern Nigerian man in a society whose rapid and disordered process of transition towards modernity makes it difficult for him to realise his idealistic dream of improving the conditions of his country so as to make it a better place to live. The British colonisers had not wished to 'Westernise' the country in depth, and rather relied on force to administer it. Obi is thus disillusioned as to the utopian idea of uniting his 'backward-minded' tribesmen and developing his society into a modern one. Besides, this ill-fated undertaking is linked to the young man's personal drama. Obi's tragic circumstances are announced in the first pages of the novel. His inevitable downfall is described on page one. As the story progresses, there is a gradual decline in this character's resolve. In the first chapters, he is quite idealistic and full of the positive energy he brings from his education in England. In the middle chapters, he realises the difference between his ideals and the Nigerian reality of graft and

[55]Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Op.cit.*, p.276
[56]*Ibid.*, Suleiman citing Herman, p.276

corruption. In the last chapters, he is in a state of mental and physical paralysis engendered by his inability to cope with multiple problems, which force him to take bribes. His deception and disillusion come from his realisation of the impossibility of changing things for the better. Unlike Christopher and Joseph, described as cynical and realistic from the first, Obi refuses to accept the new face of his country until his interests clash with the communal ones. His Western education alienates him from his people, and therefore, his 'modernity' of mind collides with Nigerian realities, making his downfall inevitable.

In the last chapters, Obi's alienation is reflected in his inability to make mental efforts, and to act judiciously. He cannot make up his mind on very serious issues (marrying Clara, leaving her, attending his mother's funeral). One may compare his state of mental paralysis to James Joyce's Eveline in *Dubliners* when the young girl does not join her fiancé to marry him, as she is overcome by traditional imperatives. He is like a numb, a 'hollow shell.' While his fellow citizens are able to make compromises and cope with modern situations in their own ways, his stubbornness and lack of judgement lead him straight to his failure. He is an anti-hero because in the last resort he is just an ordinary character. He is overtaken by forces that he cannot cope with. For the UPU members, he is not even able to take a twenty-pound bribe without being caught. This is indeed an irony for a young man who pledged to fight corruption. Though he is the only Umuofian sent to England, and thus, the *one* on whose all hopes were built, he disappoints his fellowmen who believed firmly (and here again one can

recall Jeremiah and his lamentations oven his unfamiliar vine) that 'An only palm-fruit does not get lost in the fire.'[57]

If his grandfather Okonkwo, of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, can be considered as the hero of a classical tragedy, who had the ability to take harsh decisions like sacrificing Ikemefuna as dictated by the communal law, and later committing suicide, Obi no higher than a commonplace individual and not a tragic hero. He is stubborn, mentally rigid and unable to take decisive actions. He is thus doomed to fail and he can be associated to Unoka, his ineffectual grandfather, while Okonkwo, who had resisted colonisation, and eventually killed himself, was still considered by his tribesmen as a hero long after his death.[58]

[57]Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*, Oxford: Heinemann AWS, 1960. Chapter one, p.6.
[58]Chinua Achebe, *Ibid*. The novel evokes, intra-intertextually, the period when Okonkwo was the tribe's hero.

CONCLUSION

In this research work, our purpose has been to argue, via a close analysis of the American and African novels considered, that the representation of the country and the city of their authors reveals elements of convergence, while they also diverge at times due to many factors which include the writers' respective world views and their committed posture as social realists and naturalists. This, of course, plays a big role in influencing their way of thinking, and thus, their way of writing. Actually, these differences and similarities between their depiction of and feelings as to the degradation of the countryside, as well as the dehumanising city, in the twentieth-century, is the result of the heterogeneity of their backgrounds and life experiences.

The American writers under study display their nostalgia, concerning the end of the frontier. Through their descriptions of the province, they feel concerned with its degradation; hence, it is the big city, its attire, and its vices that they firmly denounce. What they are concerned with mainly is how the human being, this imperceptible atom in a gigantic universe, handles modern life in an urban milieu which is totally deaf to his complaints and sufferings.

In parallel, the African writers mourn the loss of Mother Nature. If the American West is part of the American identity, African lands *are* identity itself for the Africans. In the double context of the African characters, tragedy is always felt twice as considerable. In effect, the countryside-city dichotomy is paralleled with the East-West colonial dichotomy, or the coloniser-colonised issue. Therefore, these

characters are alienated twice: they do not own their lands anymore, and they do not belong to their continent anymore due to the foreign presence of the white intruders.

Broadly speaking, the representation of the countryside, the machine, and the city is quite dark. It is typically deterministic and Darwinian. The repulsive state of the country is a deterministic element but it is linked, by the American writers, to the urbanisation process under the capitalist setup. For the African authors, the suffocating feature of village life is also deterministic but it is linked to both the urbanisation of rural areas through capitalist instruments, like the locomotive, and the white man's expansion plans. There is here a double violation of a traditional territory that has long served as home to the natives. In a way, the Africans can be said to have suffered the same land-identity issue as the Amerindians.

This discussion has traced the stylistic features of the novels studied back to Zola and his fellow French naturalists. It has led us to observe and conclude that the pastoral, the train and the city are all associated with the notion of evil. Indeed, in the highly deterministic atmosphere of the novels examined, the characters are either trapped in their rural environment or lost and defeated by their new urban environment. Therefore, the elements of the issue are all part of the bigger forces which are meant to dehumanise the characters, who are doomed to fail in one way or another.

The elements of the present topic are all multi-faceted and multi-dimensional. The province stands for Mother Nature, the machine stands for the *Genesis* sinful tempting snake, and the city stands for the Alma Mater, a cunning fostering mother putting on a paraphernalia of masks to drown the weakest into their own dreams. The

imposing city is an object (a giant magnet), an insect (a spider), an animal (an octopus), and a human being (a seducing woman with her attire and her objects of desire). The City is a force, but one which is both liberating and murderous. It is a liberating space which gives identity to individuals (minorities), who appropriate it because they can be part of it. However, it is a crushing force for those who are innocent enough to take its dream-killing nature for a redeeming power. The city is a memory, a field of emotions, feelings, impressions and souvenirs. The city is Self, the mirror of the soul, reflecting the psyche of the wandering atoms of its galleries of fate. Finally, it is imaginary, utopian, and dystopian.

Just like the American authors discussed here, the African writers who are committed in nature, mainly those adhering to the Marxist ideology, firmly denounced twentieth-century African realities –both colonial and neo-colonial– and manifested nostalgia for Africa's pastoral tradition. This is what categorises them among the idealists, except Achebe, whose view of modern Nigeria is quite pessimistic if we consider how he chooses to open and close his novel. Ngugi, Ekwensi and Paton, are idealistic in the sense that, despite the dark character of their narratives and the tragic failures of their protagonists, they offer hope as to the future of Africa.

We can say that the representation of rural and urban environments by our novelists bears similarities despite the seemingly apparent differences in their background (spatial and temporal). There are extrinsic and intrinsic factors of change to justify this point, among which is the very aim of the two literatures: whether they are 'ars gratia artis' (that is, art-for-art sake, or essentially aesthetic), or committed.

As mentioned earlier on in this thesis, The authors of our corpus are all reformists, each in his own way. Their denunciation of the ravages of capitalism, though varying in degrees, gives their texts a committed aspect. It is not ars gratia artis but it is art committed to a modern cause. In other words, the writer is 'the artist as militant.' With this inclination of our authors to serve the mission of truth-seeking and truth-revelation comes the issue of objectivity versus subjectivity. Just like Zola in his three naturalist manifestos (*Le Roman expérimental*, *Le Naturalisme au theatre*, and *Les Romanciers naturalistes*), the American and the African authors selected here take the oath to depict the modern town and city as they are, with their flaws and their lustreless facet. The need to reform the current state, the impulse of denunciation, and the emotionality involved in the fight led to a shift from objective realism to subjective naturalism when, paradoxically, the latter was meant to be a 'scientific' writing mode. In fact, the authors' commitment to humanity and their idealism engendered a new form of naturalism: romantic naturalism. Despite the dark picture they give of the modern countryside and the city, there is an optimistic vision found either in the reactions of some of their characters who reflect their views (such as the journeys they embark on) or in the endings of their texts (often sharply contrasting with their openings). The issue of censorship, for which not only Flaubert and Zola had to pay the price but all our corpus novelists, is a sign that the latter are reformists and truth-seekers.

Concerning the link between the novels studied here and those of the French naturalists, the influence exerted on the former by the latter is rather flagrant. Dreiser's 'barbaric naturalism' is akin to Zola's 'stinky naturalism.' They are both, 'Saboteurs of

the Status Quo,' in Clare Virginia Eby's terms. This does not mean, however, that the selected African and American novels are replicas or mere imitations of Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* cycle. On the contrary, they seem to have taken his naturalism further, which is what we tried to demonstrate in this research. The novels of the corpus are indeed Zolaesque, at least stylistically and thematically.

In conclusion, the key theme of the province-metropolis struggle is perennial. The eight authors under study express their concern about the miserable state of the pastoral and the hostile aspect of the city. Their denunciation of and protest against financial and industrial capitalism as a major cause of that can be fully understood only if we notice how these very authors' novels were received upon their publication. Just like Flaubert, Zola, and the eight novelists here, their works' first reception led to court, to endure censorship, or to repulse editors. From this standpoint, it is important to refer to the fierce reception that Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* (1867) saw. This naturalist literary father suffered from a whole campaign against his second novel. What most of the literary critics of his time reproached him for, rather out of antagonism to the naturalist movement than out of concern for preserving the *Belles Lettres,* turns out to be the very mark of an author who shocked the nineteenth-century audience by exposing human nature, who knew how to disturb stubborn minds by displaying the raw reality of the time, by hitting in the face the blindfolded obscurantist 'intellectuals who saw in originality and truth the enemies of the literary hypocrisy they defended. To appreciate Zola and his works, one must first love truth as expressed by him. The truth in this 1867 novel is found in the description of Mme Raquin (the devoted mother), her son Camille (this frail young man with fragile health), Laurent (this

passionate artist, friend of Camille, who becomes his murderer), and above all, Thérèse (the patient and resigned wife of Camille, and the tender and devoted niece of her Aunt Raquin, who had become an accomplice of her lover Laurent in the crime). Madame Raquin's overprotection of her son (sick since childhood), Camille and Thérèse's monotonous married life, and Laurent's opportunistic omnipresence in the lives of the Raquins combine in an overwhelming force that leads Thérèse and Laurent to adultery, crime, then suicide. The true face of the human being is shown to the reader -like the portrait of Camille's corpse that haunts Laurent's paintings- without shadow, without artifice. The human being can, without transition, remove the Good and adorn himself with the Evil. He can, without hesitation, mutate and become the worst enemy after a long-standing friendship. He can transform himself from the artist with the delicate brush to the murderer with the steel hands who strangles, without scruple, the person who has long taken him for his brother. The truth is there, defying all spatio-temporal limits, all socio-environmental conditions. The truth is in Camille's desperate bite on Laurent's neck, in an ultimate fight for survival against the 'human beast.' It does not fade, it does not heal, it marks the skin of the murderer forever and reminds the one who helped him that one cannot change his nature once revealed. Betrayal, infidelity, murder, conspiracy, here represent all the beautiful painting of the human being that Zola was able to reveal at the dawn of a movement that would propel him beyond French borders. Despite the fact that Ferragus described *Thérèse Raquin* as 'stinky' literature, Zola enlightened authors from across the globe, including those of our corpus.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

A/ AMERICAN LITERATURE

Crane, Stephen. *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893). In Wilson Follet, (ed.), *The Work of Stephen Crane*, New York: Wilson Follet, 1925-27.

----------------------. *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets* (1893). Adrian Hunter (ed.). Ontario, Canada: Broadview Editions, 2006.

Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*, (1900). New York: Perennial Classics, Harper and Row Publishers, 1965, (Doubleday, 1900).

---------------------. *Sister Carrie*, (1900). New York: Penguin Books, 1994 (Pennsylvania, 1981).

---------------------. *Sister Carrie*, Introduction & Notes by Herbert Leibowitz. PDF. New York: Barnes & Noble, 2005 (Doubleday, 1900; Pennsylvania Penguin, 1981)

Lewis, Sinclair. *Main Street* (1920). New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1948, in<http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/LewMain.html.1996.>

----------------------. *Main Street*, New York: The Library of America, 1992

Sinclair, Upton. *The Jungle*. (1906), in <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/SINCLAIR/toc.html.2001.>

B/ AFRICAN LITERATURE

Achebe, Chinua. *No Longer at Ease* (1960). Oxford: Heinemann AWS, 1987.

Ekwensi Cyprian. *Jagua Nana* (1961). Oxford: Heinemann, 1987 (1975).

Ngugi, Wa Thiong'o. *Petals of Blood* (1977). London: Heinemann, 1978.

------------------------ *Petals of Blood*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1986.

Paton, Alan. *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948). New York: Macmillan, 1987.

----------------------. *Cry, the Beloved Country*, New York: Scribner, 1987 (1948). PDF.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Abirached, Robert. “Dossier” (after-text file), in Emile Zola, *Thérèse Raquin*. 1867. Paris: Gallimard, 2014 (2001, 1979).

Achebe, Chinua, “African Literature as Restoration of Celebration”, *Kunapipi*, Ed. Anna Rutherford, XII, 2, 1990.

-------------------- “An Image of Africa.” *Research in African Literatures*, Vol.9, No.1, Special Issue on Literary Criticism. (Spring, 1978), pp. 1-15.

-------------“Colonialist Criticism” in *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays*. London: Heinemann, 1982 (1977, 1975).

-------------“Colonialist Criticism” in Bill Ashcroft et.al. (eds.) *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. London & New York: Routledge, 1995. pp. 57-61.

-------------*Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays, 1965-1987*. London: Heinemann, 1988.

------------------“The Black Writer’s Burden”, *Presence Africaine*, 3159 1956, 38.

Ahnebrink, Lars. *The Beginnings of Naturalism in American Fiction: A Study of the Works of Hamlin Garland, Stephen Crane, and Frank Norris with Special Reference to Some European Influences 1891-1903*. 1950. New York: Russell and Russell, 1961.

Allen, Graham. *Intertextuality,* the *New Critical Idiom*. London & New York: Taylor & Francis- Routledge, 2000.

Andrade, Susan Z. ‘The Problem of Realism and African Fiction.’ Novel: A Forum on Fiction, 42:4. 2009-003.

Arden, Eugene. “The Evil City in American Fiction.” *New York History* 35:3 (1954): pp.259-279.

Arnold, Matthew. *Culture and Anarchy* (1932). Dover Wilson, (ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Ashcroft, W.D. “Language Issues Facing Commonwealth Writers: A Reply to D’Costa”. *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 1987.

Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis; The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984). ed. & trans. by Caryl Emerson, introduction by Wayne C. Booth. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

----------- *The Dialogic Imagination, Four Essays*. ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Balogun, Odun F. *Ngûgî and African Postcolonial Narrative, The Novel as Oral Narrative in Multigenre Performance*. Quebec: World Heritage Press, 1997.

Balshaw, Maria & Kennedy, Liam (eds.). *Urban Space and Representation*. London and Sterling,VA: Pluto Press, 2000.

Balzac, Honoré de. *La Comédie humaine*, *Etudes de Mœurs*, *Scènes de la vie de Province*, *Illusions Perdues*, *Un Grand Homme de Province à Paris.* Roland Chollet (ed.). Paris: Gallimard, Pléiade, 1977. B2,T4.

Barbar, H. "Image of the African in Transition ." *African Quarterly* VII. 1. (April-June 1967). pp. 29-40.

Bardolph, Jacqueline. *Ngugi wa Thiong'o, l'homme et l'œuvre*. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1991.

Barrish, Phillip. *American Literary Realism: Critical Theory and Intellectual Prestige, 1880-1995.* Cambridge: Oxford University Press , 2001.

--------------------. *The Cambridge Introduction to American Literary Realism*. New York: CUP, 2011.

Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*. Annette Lavers (trans.). New York: The Noonday Press, 1991 (1972) (Paris: Seuil, 1957).

----------- *The Pleasure of the Text* (trans. by Richard Miller). New York: Hill & Wang, 1975 (1973, Editions du Seuil, Paris. Originally published in French as *Le Plaisir du texte*).

Baumann, Zygmunt. *City of Fears, City of Hopes.* London: Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2003.

Becker, George Joseph (ed.) and introd. *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963.

Becker-Leckrone, Megan. *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*. Hampshire & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Beier, Ulli. *Introduction to African Literature*. Longman, London, 1967.

Bell, Michael Davitt. *The Problem of American Realism: Studies in the Cultural History of a Literary Idea*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Bercovitch, Sacvan & Jehlen, Myra, (eds.). *Ideology and Classic American Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Bercovitch, Sacvan. *The American Jeremiad*. Madison: Madison University of Wisconsin Press, 1978.

Berman, Marshall. "The Twentieth Century: The Halo and the Highway." In Peter Brooker, (ed.), *Modernism/Postmodernism*. New York: Longman Group, 1992.

------------------ *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. London: Verso, 1999. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.)

Bernard, Marc. *Zola par lui-même*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1952.

----------------- 'Zola Posthume' in *Zola par lui-même*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1952. pp.167-172.

Berryman, John. "Crane's Art in *Maggie.*" In John Berryman, *Stephen Crane*. New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950. pp.263-293. Cited in *Stephen Crane*. Harold Bloom (ed.). New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007

Bertens, Hans. *Literary Theory; The Basics*. London & New York: Taylor & Francis-Routledge, 2001

--------- *Literary Theory; The Basics* (2nd ed.). London & New York: Taylor & Francis-Routledge, 2008.

Bezzazi, Amina. 'East-West Encounter and the Issue of Transition towards Modernity: The Case of Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*.' (Article) CNEPRU Research Project, Department of English, University of Algiers II, February 2014. Unpublished.

---------------- 'Interdisciplinarity in Literary Research: A Twenty-first Century Reality.' In *El Bahith*, Vol.4 N°7, (December 2012), pp.284-295.

--------------- 'Issues of Film Adaptation of Twentieth-Century American Naturalist Fiction: The Case of Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* and *An American Tragedy*.' Conference paper presented at the 2011 Study Day on Comparative Studies in Literature and Civilisation, Department of English, University of Algiers II, May 2011. Unpublished.

----------------. 'Nature and the City in Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* and *An American Tragedy*, and Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.' Magister's Degree Thesis, Department of English, University of Algiers II, April 2008. Unpublished.

Bilon, Marcelle. 'Notes.' In Guy de Maupassant, *Bel-Ami*. 1885. Paris: Larousse, 2008

Bloom, Harold. *American Naturalism*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004.

-----------------. (ed.). *Stephen Crane, Bloom's Modern Critical Views*. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007.

-----------------.*The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

-----------------.(ed.). *Upton Sinclair's* The Jungle*, Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers- Infobase Publishing, 2002.

Blumenfeld, Hans. "The Modern Metropolis." *American Urban History: An Interpretive Reader with Commentaries*. ed. Alexander B. Callow. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969. pp.166-177.

Bolt, Christine. "The American City: Nightmare, Dream or Irreducible Paradox?" [1988] *The American City: Literary Sources & Documents*. ed. and with an introduction by Graham Clarke. Vol. I. Mountfield: Helm Information, 1997. pp.287-303.

Bonnefis, Philippe. 'Commentaires.' In Guy de Maupassant, *Bel-Ami*. 1885. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2013 (Librairie Générale Française, 1983).

---------------------. 'Présentation.' In Guy de Maupassant, *Bel-Ami*. 1885. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2013 (Librairie Générale Française, 1983).

Booth, James. *Writings and Politics in Nigeria*. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1981.

Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Borie, Jean. *Zola et les mythes, ou de la nausée au salut*. Paris: Seuil, 1971.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *La Misère du Monde*. France: Editions du Seuil, 1993.

Bouvier, Pierre. *Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, portraits de décolonisés*. Paris : Les Belles Lettres, 2010.

Bradbury, Malcolm & Mc Farlane, James, (eds.). *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1991(1976).

Bradbury, Malcolm & Mc Farlane, James. "Movements, Magazines and Manifestos: The Succession from Naturalism." In Malcolm Bradbury & James Mc Farlane, (eds.), *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1991(1976).

Brand, Dana. *The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth Century American Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Brennan, Joseph X.. "Ironic and Symbolic Structure in Crane's Maggie." In *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. XVI, No. 4 (Mar., 1962), pp. 303-315

Brennan, Stephen C. '*Sister Carrie* Becomes *Carrie.*' In R. Barton Palmer (ed.), *Nineteenth Century American Fiction on Screen*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Brinkmeyer, Robert H. Jr. *Remapping Southern Literature: Contemporary Southern Writers and the West*. Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2000.

Brook, Thomas. *American Literary Realism and the Failed Promise of Contract.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Brooker, Peter, (ed.). *Modernism/Postmodernism*. New York: Longman Group, 1992.

------------------ *New York Fictions: Modernity, Postmodernism, the New Modern*. New York: Longman Publishing, 1996.

Brooks, Peter. *Realist Vision*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005.

'Bulletins — Past and Future.' *The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society* Bulletin, No. 53 (October, 1940), pp.6-7. Published by: *Railway & Locomotive Historical Society (R&LHS)*
Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43519899>. Accessed: 02-04-2020 00:15 UTC

Burthoff, Warner. *The Ferments of Realism: American Literature, 1884-1919.* New York: Free Press, 1965.

Butler, Robert. "The City as Psychological Frontier in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and Charles Johnson's *Faith and the Good Thing*." *The City in African-American Literature*. Ed. by Y. Hakutani and R. Butler. London et al: Associated University Presses, 1995. pp.123-137.

Cantalupo, Charles (ed.). *The World of Ngūgī Wa Thiong'o.* Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1993.

Carey, James W. *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society.* New York: Routledge, 1988.

Carol, Anne. *L'expérience ferroviaire : Culture somatique et voyages en train au XIXe siècle.* In: *Histoire par corps : Chair, posture, charisme* [en ligne]. Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence, 2012 (accessed, 18 February 2023). <http://books.openedition.org/pup/33870>. pp. 77-107.

Carroll, Peter N. *Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier 1629-1700*. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1969.

Carter, David. *Literary Theory*. Harpenden: Pocket Essentials, 2006.

Castle, Gregory. *The Blackwell Guide to Literary Theory*. Malden, MA., Oxford, UK, & Victoria, Australia: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Chellappan, K. "Literature Without Walls: A Search for the Still Centre." *Journal of Asian Studies*. Thiruvanmiyur : Institute of Asian Studies, 1984.

Chemain, Roger. *La Ville dans le roman africain*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1982.

Chernaik, Warren; Swales, Martin; & Vilain, Robert (eds.). *The Art of Detective Fiction*. Basingstoke-Hampshire, UK & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.

Chew, Shirley & Richards, David (eds.). *A Concise Companion to Postcolonial Literature*. Malden, MA. & Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Chukwuma, Helen. "Morality in Cyprian Ekwensi's Urban-Based Fiction." In Ernest N. Emenyonu, (ed.), *The Essential Ekwensi*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1987.

Cincotta, Howard. *An Outline of American History*. Washington D.C.: United States Information Agency, 1994.

Clare Virginia Eby. "Cultural and Historical Contexts for *Sister Carrie*." 2001. In <https://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/dreiser/scculhist.html>. Accessed: 10-01-2008.10:30:20.

Clark, Roger. "Introduction." In *Madame Bovary*, by Gustave Flaubert. Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions, 2001 (1994). pp.v-xx.

Clarke, David B. *The Consumer City and the Postmodern City*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

Clarke, Graham. "A 'Sublime' and 'Atrocious' Spectacle: New York and the Iconography of Manhattan Island." *The American City: Literary and Cultural Perspectives*. Ed. G. Clarke. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988. pp.36-61.

Clayton, Jay. & Rothstein, Eric (eds.). *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991.

Colmer, Rosemary. "The Development of Moral values in *A Man of the People." Kunapipi*. XII.2, 1990, 201.

Conder, John J. *Naturalism in American Fiction: The Classic Phase*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984.

Cook, David. "A Good Bad Heroine: A Study of Cyprian Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana.*" In *African Literature: A Critical View*. London: Longman, 1977.

---------------- *African Literature, A Critical View*, Longman, London, 1977.

Corkin, Stanley. *Realism and the Birth of the Modern United States: Cinema, Literature, and Culture*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996.

Cuddon, J.A. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. London: Penguin, 1998 (1976).

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory, A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2000 (1997).

Cunliffe, Marcus. *American Literature since 1900, The Penguin History of Literature*. vol. 9. London: Penguin Books, 1993.

Dalle Pezze, Barbara & Salzani, Carlo (eds.). *Essays on Boredom and Modernity, Critical Studies Vol. 31*. Amsterdam; New York, NY: Rodopi, 2009.

Danahy, Michael. "*Madame Bovary*: A Tongue of One's Own." In Harold Bloom (ed.), *Major Literary Characters: Emma Bovary*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1994. pp.189-210.

------------------Also in *The Feminization of the Novel*. Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 1991. pp.126-58.

------------------*The Feminization of the Novel*. Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 1991.

Danger, Pierre. *Sensations et objets dans le roman de Flaubert*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1973.

Davidson, Jim. "Interview: Chinua Achebe". *Meanjin Quarterly* 39:12,1980. pp.35-47.

Davis, Robert Con. & Schleifer, Ronald, (eds.). *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*. New York: Longman, 1998.

Den Tandt, Christophe. "Part I- Realist and Naturalist Discourses of the Urban World", "Chapter1- From the Natural to the Urban Sublime." In *The Urban Sublime in American Literary Naturalism*. Urbana & Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1998. pp.02-12.

---------------------------- *The Urban Sublime in American Literary Naturalism.* Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1998.

Dickens, Charles. *Dombey and Son*. London : Bradbury & Evans, 1848. Hazleton, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2007 (for the digital version).

Dickstein, Morris. 'Introduction' to *Main Street* by Sinclair Lewis. New York: Bantam Classics, 2008 (1920).

---------------------. "Introduction to *The Jungle.*" In *Upton Sinclair's* The Jungle*, Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*. Harold Bloom (ed.). New York: Chelsea House Publishers- Infobase Publishing, 2002.

Dinerstein, Joel. "Technology and Its Discontents: On the Verge of the Posthuman." *American Quarterly*. American Studies Association, 2006.

Dowling, Robert M. "Stephen Crane and the Transformation of the Bowery". In Harold Bloom (ed.). *Stephen Crane, Bloom's Modern Critical Views*. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007

Dreiser, Theodore. *A Book About Myself*. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1922.

--------------------. *Sister Carrie*. New York: Signet Classics, 2009. PDF. (New York: Doubleday & Page, 1900).

--------------------. *Sister Carrie* (1900). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981.

--------------------.*The Color of a Great City*. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1923.

Duchet, Claude. "Roman et Objets." In *Travail de Flaubert*. (Pres.) Gérard Genette. Paris : le Seuil, coll. « Points », 1983.

Dudley, John. *The Birth of a Jungle: Animality in Progressive-era U.S. Literature and Culture.* By Lundblad, Michael. "Review." In *Studies in American Naturalism*, Volume 8, Number 2, Winter 2013, pp.249-251.

Duerden, Dennis. "An Interview with Achebe." *Spectrum*. September, 1965.

Dunlap, George Arthur. *The City in the American Novel, 1789-1900: A Study of American Novels Portraying Contemporary Conditions in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1934.

Dyment, Clifford. *The Railway Game, An Early Autobiography*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Aldine Press, 1962.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory, An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Malden, MA., Oxford, UK, & Victoria, Australia: Blackwell Publishing, 1996 (1983).

Eby, Clare Virginia. 'Cultural and Historical Contexts for *Sister Carrie* .'2001. In <http://sceti.library.upenn.edu/dreiser/scpubhist.cfm.2001.> and <https://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/dreiser/scculhist.html>. Accessed: 10-01-2008.10:30:20.

------------------. *Dreiser and Veblen, Saboteurs of the Status Quo*. Missouri: The University of Missouri Press, 1999 (1998).

Echeruo, M.J.C.. "Chinua Achebe." In *A Celebration of Black and African Writing*. eds. B. King and K. Dgunbasan. Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Edelstein, Arthur. "Introduction." In Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*. New York: Harper & Row, 1965 (Doubleday, 1900). pp.xv-xix.

Edwards, Paul & Carroll, David R. "An Approach to the Novel in West Africa." *Phylon* Vol.23, No.4 (4th Qtr., 1962). Clark Atlanta University, pp. 319-331.

Egudu, Romanus N. "Five Nigerian Novels and Public Morality." In Dubem Okafor, (ed.), *Meditations on African Literature*, *Contributions in Afro-American and African Studies*. Number 201. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001.

Ekwensi, Cyprian. "African Literature." *Nigeria Magazine*. December, 1964.

Ellmann, Mand, (ed.). *Psychoanalytical Literary Criticism*. New York: Longman, 1994.

Emenyonu, Ernest, N. *The Rise of the Igbo Novel*. Ibadan, Oxford University Press, 1978.

Erdheim, Cara. *Rural Fictions, Urban Realities: A Geography of Gilded Age American Literature*. By Mark Storey. 'Review'. In *Studies in American Naturalism*, Volume 8, Number 2, Winter 2013, pp.251-254.

Ernst, Gilles. 'Présentation.' In Guy de Maupassant. *La Parure*. 1884. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2014 (Librairie Générale Française, 1995).

Fisher, Philip K. *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel.* New York:

Oxford UP, 1985.

-------------- "Chapter Three: The Life History of Objects: The Naturalist Novel and the City." In *Hard Facts, Setting and Form in the American Novel*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987 (1985). pp.128-178

-------------- "The Naturalist Novel and the City: Temporary Worlds." In *American Naturalism*. Harold Bloom (ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004. pp.225-236.

Flaubert, Gustave. *Madame Bovary, Mœurs de Province*. 1857. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2013 (Librairie Générale Française, 1999).

--------------------. *Madame* Bovary. 1857. Eleanor Marx-Aveling (trans.). Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions, 2001 (1994).

Folsom, Michael Brewster. "Upton Sinclair's Escape from *The Jungle*." In Harold Bloom (ed.). *Upton Sinclair's* The Jungle*, Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers- Infobase Publishing, 2002.

Francaviglia, Richard V. *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2011.

Frank, Kevin. "Censuring the Praise of Alienation: Interstices of Ante-Alienation in *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease*, and *Arrow of God*." In *Callaloo*, Vol.34, No.4, Fall 2011. The John Hopkins University Press, pp.1088-1101.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism, Four Essays* (1957). Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973.

-------------- *Biblical and Classical Myths, The Mythological Framework of Western Culture*. Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press, 2004 (1962). pp. 50-59.

--------------- "Symbolism in The Bible: 5. Sexual Imagery: The Bride and the Bridegroom; The Great Whore and the Forgiven Harlot." In Northrop Frye & Jay Macpherson, *Biblical and Classical Myths, The Mythological Framework of Western Culture*. Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press, 2004 (1962). pp. 50-59.

Fusco, Richard. "On Primitivism in '*The Call of the Wild.*'" In *American Literary Realism*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Fall, 1987, pp.76-80.

Gagiano, Annie. *Achebe, Head, Marechera: On Power and Change in Africa*. Boulder, Colorado & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000.

Gandal, Keith. *The Virtues of the Vicious, Jacob Riis, Stephen Crane and the Spectacle of the Slum.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997

Gans, Eric Lawrence. *Madame Bovary, the End of Romance*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989.

Garland, Hamlin. *Main Travelled Roads* (1891). Charlottesville: The University of Virginia American Studies Program, 2003.

Garreau, Joel. *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*. New York: Anchor Books, 1992.

Gates, Robert A. *The New York Vision: Interpretations of New York City in the American Novel*. Univ. Press of America, 1987.

Gelfant, Blanche. *The American City Novel*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954.

Gendzier, Irene. *Fanon: A Critical Study*. London: Wildwood House, 1973.

Gengembre, Gérard. *Les Rougon-Macquart d'Emile Zola*. Paris: Pocket, 2003.

Gibran, Kahlil Gibran.'Martha,' In *Nymphs of the Valley*. Trans. by H. M. Nahmad, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948 (originally published in Arabic as *Araa'is Al Murooj*, 1906), pp.3-24.

Gidley, Mick & Lawson-Peebles, Robert (eds.). *Views of American Landscapes*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Gikandi, Simon. “Chinua Achebe and the Invention of African Culture.” *Research in African Literatures* - Volume 32, Number 3, Fall 2001, pp. 3-8. Indiana University Press.

------------------. *Reading Chinua Achebe: Language and Ideology in Fiction*. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1991.

Giles, James Richard. *The Naturalistic Inner-City Novel In America: Encounters With The Fat Man.* Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1995.

Glazener, Nancy. *Reading for Realism: The History of a Literary Institution.* Durham: Duke University Press,1997.

Gordimer, Nadine. ‘The Train from Rhodesia.’ 1947. From *The Soft Voice of the Serpent and Other Stories*, 1952. In *British Literature*, Glencoe. ILL: Glencoe, 2009.

Goyal, Yogita. *Romance, Diaspora,* and *Black Atlantic Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Griffiths, Garreth. “Language and Action in the Novels of Chinua Achebe.” *African Literature Today*, 5, 1971.

Griffiths, Richard. “Introduction.” In J.-K. Huysmans. *Parisian Sketches*. A translation of *Croquis Parisiens* (the 1886 edition). London: The Fortune Press, 1960 (1880).

Gugelberger, Georg M. *Marxism and African Literature*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1986.

Haavik, Kristof. “Zola’s Post-Colonial City.” *Excavatio*, Vol. XXV, 2015.

Habegger, Alfred. *Gender, Fantasy, and Realism in American Literature*. New York: Columbia UP, 1982.

Hakutani, Yoshinobu & Butler, Robert (eds.). *The City in African American Literature*, London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 2005.

Harris, Jonathan Gil. *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Herman, David (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*. Cambridge, UK & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Heywood, Christopher. *A History of South African Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Hofstadter, Richard. 'Life in the City,' (quoted) In *American Literature*. Glencoe, 2009.

Holst Petersen. Kirsten, "African Literature as Restoration of Celebration." *Kunapipi*, Vol.12, 1990.

Homaifar, Nazaneen. "The African Prostitute: An Everyday '*Debrouillard*' in Reality and African Fiction." In *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Dec., 2008), pp. 173-182. Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/25473410 Accessed: 27-06-2017 08:19 UTC

Homberger, Eric. "Chicago and New York: Two Versions of American Modernism." In Malcolm Bradbury & James Mc Farlane, (eds.). *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1991(1976).

Howard, June. *Form and History in American Literary Naturalism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.

Hume, Kathryn. *American Dream, American Nightmare, Fiction Since 1960* (2000). Urbana and Chicago: Univerity of Illinois Press, 2002.

Hunt, Tristram. "From Jane Austen to Zadie Smith – The City v the Country in Literature." Sat 12 March 2016 12.00 GMT, in <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/12/raymond-williams-the-country-and-the-city-rural-versus-urban>.

Hurm, Gerd. *Fragmented Urban Images: The American City in Modern Fiction from Stephen Crane to Thomas Pynchon*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991.

Huth, Hans. *Nature and the American, Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes*. California: University of California Press, 1957.

Ibitokun, B.N. "Prostitution or Neurosis: A Note on Cyprian Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana.*" In *Nsukka Studies in African Literature* 3, October, 1980.

Innes, C.L., & Lindfors, Bernth. *Critical Perspectives on Chinua Achebe*. Washington D.C. & London: Three Continent Press, 1978.

Irele, Abiola. "The Tragic conflict in the Novels of Chinua Achebe." *Introduction to African Literature: Anthology of Critical Writings from Black Orpheus*, Ed. Ulli Beier. London: Longman, 1967.

Irele, Abiola. “Chinua Achebe: The Tragic Conflict in His Novels.” In Ulli Beier, (ed.), *Introduction to African Literature*. Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1967.

Isegawa, Moses. ‘Introduction.’ In Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Petals of Blood*. PDF. London: Penguin Group, 2002. (Oxford, & Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1977).

Isichei, Elizabeth A. *A History of the Ibgo People*. London, Macmillan, 1976.

Iyasere, Solomon Ogbede. “African Critics on African Literature: A Study in misplaced Hospitality.” *African Literature Today*, 7, 1985, pp.20-27.

Izevbaye, Dan. “Chinua Achebe and the African Novel.” In F. Abiola Irele (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the African Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. pp. 31-50.

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books, 1961.

James, Henry. *Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers and English Writers*. Mark Wilson and Leon Edel (eds.). Vol. I. New York: Library of America, 1984.

Jameson, Fredric, ‘Postmodernism and Consumer Society’, in Peter Brooker, (ed.), *Modernism/Postmodernism*, (New York: Longman Group, 1992.)

--------------------- *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1989). U.S.A.: Duke University Press, 1999.

-------------------- *Marxism and Form*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974 (1971).

--------------- *The Ideologies of Theory*. London & New York: Verso, 2008.

Jehlen, Myra. “The Novel and the Middle Class in America.” In *Ideology and Classic American Literature.* Eds. Sacvan Bercovitch & Myra Jehlen. New York: Cambridge U. P., 1986.

Jewell, Andrew & Stout, Janis (eds.). *The Selected Letters of Willa Cather*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.

Johnson, James Weldon. ‘My City’. From *The Book of American Negro Poetry*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922. (ed.) James Weldon Johnson, In <https://poets.org/poem/my-city> (*The Century Magazine*, 1923).

Johnston, John H. *The Poet and the City: A Study in Urban Perspectives*. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1984.

Kamm, Lewis. *The Object in Zola's Rougon-Macquart*. Madrid: Studia Humanitatis, 1978.

Kaplan, Amy. *The Social Construction of American Realism.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Kazin, Alfred, (ed.). *On Native Grounds*, A*n Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch Publishers, 1982.

Kazin, Alfred. "Two Educations: Edith Wharton and Theodore Dreiser." In Alfred Kazin, (ed.), *On Native Grounds*, a*n Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch Publishers, 1982.

Kelbaugh, Douglas S. *Repairing the American Metropolis*. Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 2002.

Kerouac, Jack. *The Town and the City*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1950.

Killam, G.D. *The Novels of Chinua Achebe.* New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1969. (London: Heinemann, 1975.)

------------------- *The Writings of Chinua Achebe*. London: Heinemann, 1977 (1969).

-------------------(ed) *African Writers on African writing*. London: HEB, 1978.

-------------------*An Introduction to the Writings of Ngugi*. London& Exeter, N. H.: Heinemann, 1980.

------------------ *Petals of Blood*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2004.

King, Bruce, (ed.). *Introduction to Nigerian Literature*. Lagos: University of Lagos and Evan Brothers Ltd., 1971.

------------------- *The Search for the Past: East and Central African Writing*. London: The Macmillan Press, 1980.

Kolodny, Annette. *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975.

Larson, Charles, R. *The Emergence of African Fiction*. London: Macmillan, 1978.

-------------------, *The Search for the Past: East and Central African Writing*. London: Macmillan, 1980.

Lawlor, Mary. *Recalling the Wild: Naturalism and the Closing of the American West*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2000.

Lehan, Richard Daniel. “American Literary Naturalism: The French Connection.” In *Nineteenth- Century Fiction* 38 (1984): pp.529-557.

--------------------. *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History*. Berkeley & Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1998.

Lindfors Bernth. (ed.) *Critical Perspectives on Nigerian Literature*. London: HEB, 1979.

---------------- “The Palm Oil with which Achebe’s “words are Eaten”.”*African Literature Today*, 1 (1968) pp.3-18.

---------------- “Interview with Cyprian Ekwensi.” In *World Literature Written in English*, Vol. 13, 1974- Issue 02. pp. 141-154. Published online: 18-07-2008.

---------------- (ed.) *Critical Perspectives of Nigerian Literature*. London, HEB, 1979.

---------------- “Towards an Achebe Iconography.” In *African Textualities –Texts, Pre-Texts and Contexts of African Literature*. Trenton, NJ & Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 1997.

Little, Kenneth. *The Sociology of Urban Women’s Image in African Literature*. London: Macmillan, 1980.

Lodge, David. *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. New York: Longman, 1988.

---------------- “Graham Greene and the Anxiety of Influence.” In *The Year of Henry James*. London: Harvill Secker, 2006 (Random House ebooks, 2014). pp.134-147.

Loeb, Monica. *Literary Marriages: A Study of Intertextuality in a Series of Short Stories by Joyce Carol Oates.* Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2002.

Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism, The New Critical Idiom*. London & New York: Taylor & Francis Routledge,1998.

------------- *Language and Theme: Essays on African Literature*. Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1990.

Loving, Jerome. *The Last Titan, A Life of Theodore Dreiser*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2005.

Lukács, Georg. “Realism in the Balance” (1938)—Lukács’ defence of literary realism, Wikipedia, anonymous, In <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gy%C3%B6rgy_Luk%C3%A1cs>

Lundblad, Michael. *The Birth of a Jungle: Animality in Progressive-era U.S. Literature and Culture.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, MA & London: M.I.T. Press, 1960.

Lyon, Harris Merton. “*Sister Carrie*” In Donald Pizer (ed.). *Critical Essays on Theodore Dreiser*. Boston, Massachusetts: G. K. Hall & Co., 1981.

Marcus, Laura. “Oedipus Express: Trains, Trauma and Detective Fiction.” In Chernaik, Warren; Swales, Martin; & Vilain, Robert (eds.). *The Art of Detective Fiction*. Basingstoke-Hampshire, UK & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000. pp.201-21

Marienstras, Elise. *Les Mythes Fondateurs de la Nation Américaine: Essai sur le Discours Idéologique de l’Indépendance (1763- 1800)*. Paris: François Maspero, 1976.

Marshall, Leon S. “The English and American Industrial City of the Nineteenth Century.” [1937]. *American Urban History: An Interpretive Reader with Commentaries*. Ed. Alexander B. Callow. New York et al: Oxford University Press, 1969. pp.148-155.

Martin, Jay. “*Maggie* and Satire.” In *Harvests of Change: American Literature 1865-1914*, by Jay Martin. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967.

Martin, Ronald E. *American Literature and the Universe of Force.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1981.

Marx, Leo. “Pastoralism in America.” In Sacvan Bercovitch & Myra Jehlen, (eds.), *Ideology and Classic American Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1986.)

------------- *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964. (Oxford & New York: OUP, 2000.)

-------------- “The Railroad-in-the-Landscape: An Iconological Reading of a Theme in American Art.” in <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=5665704>

Mathiessen, F. O. “A Picture of Conditions.” In Donald Pizer, (ed.), *Critical Essays on Theodore Dreiser*. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1981.

Maupassant, Guy de. *Contes Normands et Parisiens*. Paris: Hachette Education- Bernard Père et Clam-Classiques Hachette N°34, 01-01-2000 (1993).

----------------------. *Le Horla et Autres Contes Fantastiques*. Paris: Hachette Education-Classiques Hachette N°48, 01-01-2000. (Bernard Père et Clam).

----------------------. 'The Necklace,' In *A Day in the Country and Other Stories*. David Coward Trans. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. pp.269-281.

Mazel, David. *American Literary Environmentalism*. Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1999.

Mbiti, John S. *African Religions and Philosophy*. London, Heinemann, 1967.

McKibben, Bill. *The End of Nature*. New York: Random House, 1989.

McDonald, Bruce, F. "Chinua Achebe and the Structure of Colonial Tragedy." *The Literary Half-Yearly* XXI, 1st January 1980: 62.

McDonald, Gail. *American Literature and Culture 1900–1960*. Malden, MA; Oxford, UK; Victoria, Australia: Blackwell, 2007.

McEvan, Neil. *Africa and the Novel*. London: Macmillan, 1983.

McKelvey, Blake. *The City in American History*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1969.

McLaughlin, Joseph. *Writing the Urban Jungle, Reading Empire in London from Doyle to Eliot*. Charlottesville and London: The University Press of Virginia, 2000.

Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Trans. Howard Greenfeld from *Portrait du Colonise précédé du Portrait du Colonisateur*. UK : Earthscan Publications, 2003 (Britain: Souvenir Press (Educational & Academic), 1974 ; The Orion Press, 1965). Correa: Editions Buchet/Chastel, 1957.

Mencken, Henry Louis. 'Memories of a Long Life.' In Joshi, S. T. (ed.), *Mencken on Mencken, A New Collection of Autobiographical Writings*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010.

Miller, Elise. "The Feminization of American Realist Theory." *American Literary Realism* 23.1 (1990): pp.20-41.

Mitterand, Henri. 'Préface.' In Emile Zola, *La Curée*. Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1996 (1871). pp.5-14.

Mphahlele, Ezekiel. *The African Image*. Faber: London, 1974.

Mookerjee, R. N. “Muckraking and Fame: *The Jungle*.” In Harold Bloom (ed.). *Upton Sinclair’s* The Jungle*, Bloom’s Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers- Infobase Publishing, 2002.

Moore, Gerald. *Seven African Writers*. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

---------------- (ed) *Twelve African Writers*. London: Hutchinson University - Library for Africa, 1980.

Muir, Edwin. *The Structure of the Novel*. Bombay: Allied, 1966.

Mulligan, Roark. **‘Theodore Dreiser's Private Library’.** Originally published in *Dreiser Studies* 33.2 (2002): 40-76. Republished on *Dreiser Web Source* by permission of the author and *Dreiser Studies*. In <http://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/dreiser/library/mulligan.html>

Mumford, Lewis. *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1961.

--------------. *The Culture of Cities*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938.

-------------. “The Disappearing City.” [1956]. *The American City: Literary Sources & Documents*. Ed and with an introduction by Graham Clarke. Vol. I. Mountfield: Helm Information, 1997. pp.137-141.

------------. “Megalopolis as Anti-City.” [1956]. *The American City: Literary Sources & Documents*. Ed and with an introduction by Graham Clarke. Vol. I. Mountfield: Helm Information, 1997. pp.142-150.

Munro, Ian H.. *Textual Dynamics in Chinua Achebe's* Home and Exile *and* No Longer at Ease. *International Fiction Review*. Volume: 31. Issue: 1-2. Publication Year: 2004.

Nabokov, Vladimir. “On a Book Entitled *Lolita*.” In *The Annotated Lolita*. Alfred Appel, Jr. (ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970.

Napierkowski, Marie Rose (ed.). *Novels for Students* vol.4. Detroit, MI: Gale, 1998.

Narasimhaiah, C.D. (ed.). *Awakened Conscience: Studies in Commonwealth Literature*. New Delhi: Sterling, 1978.

--------------- *Commonwealth Literature: Problems and Response*. Madras: MacMillan, 1981.

Nazareth, Peter, (ed.). *Critical Essays on Ngugi Wa Thiong’o*. New York: Twayne, 2000.

Neefs, Jacques. 'Preface.' In *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert. 1857. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2013 (Librairie Générale Française, 1999).

Ngara, Emmanuel. *Art and Ideology in African Novel*. London: Heinemann,1985.

Ngozi Ezenwa-Ohaeto & Ifeyinwa J. Ogbazi (eds.). *In the Perspectives of Language and Literature: Essays in Honour of R.U. Uzoezie*. Nimo, Nigeria: Rex Charles and Patrick Ltd., 2011.

Ngugi, Wa Thiong'o. *A Grain of Wheat*. New York: Penguin, 2002. PDF. 'Introduction' Abdulrazak Gurnah.

---------------------."Chinua Achebe: A Man of the People." In *Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics*. London: Heinemann, 1972.

--------------------. *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*. London: Heinemann, 1989 (1981)

--------------------. *Homecoming*. London: Heinemann, 1972.

--------------------. *Petals of Blood*. PDF. London & New York: Penguin Group, 2002 (Oxford, & Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1977).

Nietzsche, Friedrich. "On the Use and Abuse of History for Life." 1874. trans. Adrian Collins. New York: Mac Millan, 1957 (1919). (*Untimely Meditations* 1873-1876.)

Niven, Alstair. "Chinua Achebe and the Possibility of Modern Tragedy." *Kunapipi* XII,1990, 43.

Njoku, Benedict Chiaka. "Chapter Two: *No Longer at Ease*." In *The Four Novels of Chinua Achebe: A Critical Study*. New York: Peter Lang, 1984. pp. 38-59.

---------------------. *The Four Novels of Chinua Achebe: A Critical Study*. New York: Peter Lang, 1984.

Nkosi, Lewis. *Tasks and Arks: The Men and Styles of African Literature*. Longman: London, 1981.

Norris, Frank. *The Octopus, A Story of California*. 1901. Gutenberg Project, PDF.

-----------------. 'Zola as a Romantic Writer.' In *Documents of American Realism and Naturalism*. Donald Pizer (ed.). Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998.

Nwahunanya, Chinyere. "Chapter twenty-seven: Jagua Nana's Children: The Image of the Prostitute in Post-Colonial African Literature." In *In the Perspectives of Language*

and Literature: Essays in Honour of R.U. Uzoezie. Ngozi Ezenwa-Ohaeto & Ifeyinwa J. Ogbazi (eds.). Nimo, Nigeria: Rex Charles and Patrick Ltd., 2011.

O'Donnell, Patrick & Davis, Robert Con (eds.). *Intertextuality and Contemporary American Fiction*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

Oates, Joyce Carol. "Imaginary Cities: America." In *Literature and the Urban Experience: Essays on the City and Literature*. Eds. Michael C. Jaye & Ann Chalmers Watts. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1981. 20 Jan. 2009 <http://jco.usfca.edu/bellow03.html>.

Obiechina, Emmanuel N. *Culture, Tradition and Society in the West African Novel* (1975). African Studies Series. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980 (1975).

---------------------- "Nature, Music and Art." In Emmanuel Obiechina, *Culture, Tradition and Society in the West African Novel*, "Part 2: Domestication of the Novel in West Africa, chapter 3." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

---------------------- "The Human Dimension of History in *Arrow of God.*" In *Critical Perspectives on Chinua Achebe*, (eds.) Innes, L. and Lindfors, B. London: HEB, 1979.

Ofor, G.N. "The Urban Novel: A Historical Experience." In Ernest Emenyonu et al., (eds.), *Calabar Studies in African Literature 6: African Literature and African Historical Experiences*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 1991.

Ogungbesan, Kolawole. *New West African Literature* London: HEB, 1979.

------------------- "Politics and the African Writer: The Example of Achebe." In *African Studies Review*, 17, 1974.

Okafor, Dubem, (ed.). *Meditations on African Literature, Contributions in Afro-American and African Studies*, Number 201. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001.

Okara, Gabriel. "Towards an Evolution of an African Language for African Literature." *Kunapipi*. XII, 21, 1990, 187.

Okonkwo, Juliet I., "Ekwensi and the 'Something New and Unstable' in Modern Nigerian Culture." In D.I. Nwoga, *Literature and Modern West African Culture*. Benin City, Nigeria: Ethiope Publishing Corporation, 1978.

Oladele, Taiwo. *Culture and the Nigerian Novel*. London: Macmillan, 1982.

Ousby, Ian (ed.). *Comparison of Literatures in English*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 1994.

Owings, Loren C. *Quest for Walden: The 'Country Book' in American Popular Literature*. North Carolina: Mc Farland & Company Publishers, 1997.

Palmer, Eustace. *The Growth of the African Novel: Studies in West African Literature*. London: HEB, 1979.

----------------------,*An Introduction to the African Novel*. London: HEB, 1972.

Park, Robert E. "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment." [1922]. *The City: American Experience*. Ed. by Alan Trachtenberg, Peter Neill, and Peter C. Bunnell. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971. pp.223-236.

Parker, Kenneth. '"CHANNEL FIVE," 'Interview with Ngugi wa Thiong'o'' by Kenneth Parker. In *Marxism Today*. September, 1982. pp.35-6.

Parrington, Vernon Louis. *Main Currents in American Thought, An Interpretation of American Literature from the Beginnings to 1920. Vol. 3: The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America 1860-1920* (1930). Norman, Oklahoma & London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1930.)

Paton, Alan. "Who Is Really to Blame for the Crime Wave in South Africa?" In *The Forum*, VIII, Number 37, December 15, 1945.

Phillips, William L. "The Imagery of Dreiser's Novels." In Donald Pizer, (ed.), *Critical Essays on Theodore Dreiser*. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1981.

Pike, Burton. *The Image of the City in Modern Literature*. Princeton University Press, 1981.

Pizer, Donald. (ed.). *Critical Essays on Theodore Dreiser*. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1981.

----------------------- *Documents of American Realism and Naturalism*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998.

----------------------- "Stephen Crane's *Maggie* and American Naturalism." In *Criticism, A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts*, VII, (Spring 1965.)

----------------------- "The Early Modern Period, 1915-1950." In Donald Pizer, (ed.), *Documents of American Realism and Naturalism*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998.

---------------------- & Harbert, Earl, (eds.). *American Realists and Naturalists.* Vol. 12 of *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1982.

------------------------(ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism: Howells to London*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

----------------------- *Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. Revised Edition. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984.

---------------------- "'True Art Speaks Plainly': Theodore Dreiser and the Late Nineteenth Century American Debate over Realism and Naturalism." In *Nineteenth Century Prose.* 23. 2 (Fall 1996): 76.

------------------------ *The Theory and Practice of American Literary Naturalism: Selected Essays and Reviews*. Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993.

Plett, Heinrich F. (ed.). *Intertextuality, Research in Text Theory*. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1991.

Porte, Joel & Morris, Saundra (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Porter, Laurence M. & Gray, Eugene F. *Gustave Flaubert's* Madame Bovary, *A Reference Guide*. Westport, Connecticut & London: Greenwood Press, 2002.

Povey, John. "Cyprian Ekwensi: The Novelist and Pressure of the City." In Edgar Wright, (ed.), *Critical Evaluation of African Literature*. London: Heinemann, 1973.

Preston, Peter & Simpson-Housley, Paul (eds.). *Writing the City, Eden, Babylon and the New Jerusalem*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.

Prusik, Charles. "Rethinking Realism: A Critique of Georg Lukacs." *American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal* 5:1 Fall 2012 / Winter 2013.

Quayson, Ato. "Self-Writing and Existential Alienation in African Literature: Achebe's *Arrow of God." Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 42, No. 2, *Achebe's World: African Literature at Fifty* (Summer 2011), pp. 30-45, Indiana University Press, In <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/reseafrilite.42.2.30>

Reffait, Christophe. 'Présentation.' In Emile Zola, *La Bête humaine*. 1890. Paris: Flammarion, 2007, pp.07-39; and his 'Dossier', pp.403-442.

Reichart-Burikukiye, Christiane. ‘The Railway in Colonial East Africa: Colonial Iconography and African Appropriation of a New Technology.’ In *Landscape, Environment and Technology in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*. Toyin Falola & Emily Brownell (eds.). New York, London: Routledge, 2012. pp. 62-83.

Riggio, Thomas P. ***Biography of Theodore Dreiser*,** 2000. In <https://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/dreiser/tdbio.html>

Riis, Jacob. *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York*. 1890. Bedford Series in History and Culture. Ed. David Leviatin. Boston: Bedford Books, 1996 (New York: Scribner, 1890).

Ringdal, Nils Johan. *Love for Sale, a World History of Prostitution*. Richard Daly (Trans. from the Norwegian). New York: Grove Press, 2004 (1997).

Robbe-Grillet, Alain. *For a New Novel, Essays on Fiction*. Trans. by Richard Howard. New York: Grove Press, 1965 (Originally published as *Pour un nouveau roman*, Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1963).

-------------------- *Pour un nouveau roman*. Paris : Les Editions de Minuit, 1963.

Roberts, Michèle. “The Fallen Woman: Prostitution in Literature.” In <https://amp.theguardian.com/books/2017/apr/14/the-fallen-woman-prostitution-in-literature>. Fri. 14 Apr. 2017 11.00 BST. Accessed, 24-11-2020, 23:49.

Rogers, P. “Chinua Achebe’s Poems of Regeneration.” *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 10,1976, 1-9.

Rooney, Ellen (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Literary Theory*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Roscoe, Adrian. *Mother of Gold: A Study in West African Literature*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1971.

Ruland, Richard & Bradbury, Malcolm. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism, A History of American Literature*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

Rutherford, Anna. “Interview with Chinua Achebe”. *Kunapipi*. IX, 2 (1987): 4.

Sander, Reinhard; Lindfors, Bernth; & Cintrón, Lynette. *Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o Speaks: Interviews with the Kenyan Writer*. Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 2006

Saxton, Arnold. ‘Behind Closed Doors: An Enquiry into the Description of Domestic Interiors in Zola’s Rougon-Macquart Novels.’ Master of Philosophy Dissertation. The University of London, December 1985.

Schmitz, Thomas A. *Modern Literary Theory and Ancient Texts, An Introduction*. Malden, MA., Oxford, UK, & Victoria, Australia: Blackwell Publishing, 2007 (2002).

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Parerga and Paralipomena, Short Philosophical Essays, Vol.2*. Adrian del Caro & Christopher Janaway (eds. trans.). ‘Introduction,’ by Christopher Janaway. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

-------------------- *Parerga et Paralipomena ; Aphorismes sur la sagesse dans la vie*. Chapitre II- De ce que l’on est. III- La Douleur et l’ennui –L’intelligence (pp.28-57) Trans. In French by J.-A. Cantacuzène. Digitised by Guy Heff, January 2013, in <www.schopenhauer.fr>.

Selden, Raman, (ed.). *The Theory of Criticism: From Plato to the Present*. London and New York: Longman Group, 1996 (1988).

Selden, Raman, Widdowson, Peter & Brooker, Peter. (eds.) *A Reader’s Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* (5th ed.). Harlow, England, London & New York: Pearson Education, 2005.

Seltzer, Mark. *Bodies and Machines*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Sembène, Ousmane. *Les Bouts de bois de Dieu*. Paris: Le Livre Contemporain, (1960), & London: William Heinemann AWS, 1962. Translation in English by Francis Price as *God’s Bits of Wood*.

Service, Robert William. ‘The Call of the Wild’ (1916). In *The Spell of the Yukon and Other Verses*, (published in Britain under the title *Songs of a Sourdough*). New York, N. Y., Newark, N. J.: Barse & Co., 1916.

Shaffer, E.S. (ed.). *Comparative Criticism, Myth and Mythologies (Vol.21)*. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Sherman, Stuart Pratt. “The Naturalism of Mr. Dreiser.” (1915). In *The Nation*, Vol.101, No.2631. Dec 1915. pp.648-650. Also in Donald Pizer, (ed.), *Critical Essays on Theodore Dreiser*. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1981.

-------------------- *On Contemporary Literature*. “III- The Barbaric Naturalism of Theodore Dreiser.” New York: Henry Holt, 1917. pp.85-101.

Simmel, Georg. “The Metropolis and Mental Life.” In *The Sociology of Georg Simmel,* ed. Kurt Wolff. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1950. pp.410-13.

--------------- *The Metropolis and Mental Life*. H. H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills (Trans.). In Richard Sennett (ed.) *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969. pp. 47-60.

---------------- *The Metropolis and Mental Life*. In Kurt Wolff (Trans. ed.) *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. New York: Free Press, 1950, pp. 409-424.

Simoneaux, Katherine G. “Color Imagery in Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*.” In *CLA Journal*, XVIII, September 1974.

Slotkin, Richard. “Myth and the Production of History.” In Sacvan Bercovitch & Myra Jehlen, (eds.), *Ideology and Classic American Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994 (1986).

--------------- *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization 1800-1890*. Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1998.

Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. New York: Random House, 1961(1950). Accessed in <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/HNS/hns_home.html.1996.>

------------------- “Symbol and Idea in *Virgin Land*.” In Sacvan Bercovitch & Myra Jehlen, (eds.), *Ideology and Classic American Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994 (1986).

--------------------“The Myth of the Garden and Turner’s Frontier Hypothesis.” In Jessica Munns & Gita Rajan, (eds.), *A Cultural Studies Reader: History, Theory, Practise*. New York: Longman, 1995.

Sommer, Marcel. *Les Villes et les livres; l’image de la ville dans la littérature africaine francophone*. Paris: L’Harmattan, 2007.

Sorensen, Eli Park. *Postcolonial Studies and the Literary Theory, Interpretation and the Novel*. Hampshire & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Soyinka, Wole. *Myth, Literature and the African World*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Starr, Kevin. ‘Introduction.’ In Frank Norris, *The Octopus, A Story of California*. 1901. New York: Penguin, 1986. pp.vii-xxxi

Steen, Gerard. *Understanding Metaphor in Literature*. New York: Longman, 1994.

Stein, Linda L. & Lehu, Peter J. *Literary Research and the American Realism and Naturalism Period, Strategies and Sources*. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2009.

Stevenson, Douglas K. *American Life and Institutions*. Washington D.C.: United States Information Agency, 1998.

Storey, Mark. *Rural Fictions, Urban Realities: A Geography of Gilded Age American Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Stratton, Florence. *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.

Suleiman, Susan Rubin. "Judith Herman and Contemporary Trauma Theory." In *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, Vol.36, Numbers 1&2, Spring/Summer 2008, pp.276-281.

Sundquist, Eric J. "The Country of the Blue." In Donald Pizer, (ed.), *Documents of American Realism and Naturalism*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998.

---------------------- (ed.) and introd. *American Realism: New Essays*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1982.

Sutherland, John. *50 Literature Ideas You Really Need to Know*. London: Quercus Publishing, 2010.

Svendsen, Lars. *A Philosophy of Boredom*. Trans. by John Irons. London: Reaktion Books, 2005 (Oslo: Universitets Forlaget, 1999).

Tanner, Tony. *City of Words, American Fiction 1950-1970*. London: Jonathan Cape LTD, 1971.

Taunton, Matthew. *Fictions of the City, Class, Culture and Mass Housing in London and Paris*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Tavernier-Courbin, Jacqueline. "*The Call of the Wild* and *The Jungle*: Jack London's and Upton Sinclair's Animal and Human Jungles." In Harold Bloom (ed.). *Upton Sinclair's* The Jungle*, Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers- Infobase Publishing, 2002. pp.99-123.

--------------------. Also in Donald Pizer, *The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism, Howells to London*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995 (2006). pp.236-262.

Taylor John, V. *The Primal Vision: Christian Preserve Amid African Religion*. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1963.

Telgen, Diane (ed.). 'Glossary of Literary Terms.' In *Novels for Students* (Vol.1). Detroit, New York, Toronto and London: Gale, 1997.

The Story of Africa- Africa & Europe 1800-1914 (BBC World Service), In <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/11chapter12.shtml>

Timms, Edward & Kelley, David (eds.). *Unreal City: Urban Experience in Modern European Literature and Art*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985.

Tonnellier, François. "Le Médecin de Campagne ou l'Ambiguïté des Symboles." translated as "The Rural Physician or the Ambiguity of Symbols." In *Les Tribunes de la Santé*, Vol.23, Issue 2, 2009, pp.57-63

Trachtenberg, Alan. *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979 (1965).

Turner, Frederick Jackson. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893). In Jessica Munns & Gita Rajan, (eds.), *A Cultural Studies Reader: History, Theory, Practise*. New York: Longman, 1995.

-------------------------- *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, (1893). New York: Henry Holt and Company of New York, 1921 (1920).

Varma, Rashmi. *The Postcolonial City and Its Subjects, London, Nairobi, Bombay*. New York and London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2012.

Veblen, Thorstein, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, (1899), in <http://www.fullbooks.com/The-Theory-of-the-Leisure-Class.html.> and <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/VEBLEN/veb_toc.html.1996.>

Virgil. *The Georgics*. Book II: 458-542 'The Joys of the True Life.' In. A. S. Kline (trans.) 2002. In <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasgeorgics.php>.

Visser, Irene. “Trauma Theory and Postcolonial Literary Studies.” In *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, Vol. 47, 2011- Issue 03. pp.270-82. Published online: 14-04-2011.

--------------- “Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospects.” In *Humanities* 2015, 4, pp.250-265.

Voss, Arthur. *The American Short Story, A Critical Survey*. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1973.

Walcutt, Charles Child. “Stephen Crane: Naturalist and Impressionist.” In *American Literary Naturalism: A Divided Stream*, chapter 4. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956.

---------------------------- *American Literary Naturalism: A Divided Stream*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956.

Walker, Susan D. *The Railroad in the American Landscape: 1850-1950*. Massachusetts: Wellesley, 1981.

Walkowitz, Judith R. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London.* University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1992.

Walsh, William. “Chinua Achebe in A Manifold Voice.” *Studies in Commonwealth Literature*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1970.

Warren, Kenneth. *Black and White Strangers: Race and American Literary Realism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, INC., (ed.). “*New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures.”* New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, 1975.

Wauthier, Claude. *The Literature and Thought of Modern Africa*. London: Heinemann, Educational Books, 1978.

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, (1904-05). (trans.) Talcott Parsons & Anthony Giddens. London & Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1930 (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia American Studies Program, 2001.)

Webster, Roger. *Studying Literary Theory*. London: Arnold, 1996 (1990).

Wellek, René, & Warren, Austin. *Theory of Literature*. London: Penguin Books, 1985.

Wiener, Martin J. *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980*. London: Penguin Books, 1992. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981.)

Williams, Patrick. *Ngugi Wa Thiong'o*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.

Williams, Raymond. "The Metropolis and the Emergence of Modernism." In Peter Brooker, (ed.), *Modernism/Postmodernism*. New York: Longman Group, 1992.

----------------- *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

--------------------- *The Country and the City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

--------------------- *Unreal City: Urban Experience in Modern European Literature and Art*. Edward Timms & David Kelley, (eds.). Manchester: Manchester University Press and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985.

Wolfreys, Julian. *Writing London (Vol.2): Materiality, Memory, Spectrality*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Wren, Robert M. *Achebe's World: The Historical and Cultural Context of the Novels of Chinua Achebe*. Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1981 (1980).

----------------- "'Pity, That': Anarchy in Lagos: *No Longer at Ease*." In *Achebe's World, The Historical and Cultural Context of the Novels of Chinua Achebe*. London: Longman, 1980.

Wright, Laura. *"Wilderness into Civilized Shapes": Reading the Postcolonial Environment.* Athens, Georgia & London: The University of Georgia Press, 2010.

---------------. Introduction: "Imagining the Postcolonial Environment", 'Chapter One: Inventing Tradition and Colonizing the Plants: Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* and Zakes Mda's *Heart of Redness*.' In *"Wilderness into Civilized Shapes": Reading the Postcolonial Environment.* Athens, Georgia & London: The University of Georgia Press, 2010. pp. 19-55.

Wrobel, David M. *The End of American Exceptionalism (Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal)*. Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993.

Yoder, Jon A. "The Muckraker." In Harold Bloom (ed.). *Upton Sinclair's* The Jungle*, Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers- Infobase Publishing, 2002

Ziff, Larzer. *The American 1890s: Life and Times of a Lost Generation.* New York: Viking, 1966.

Zola, Emile. *Germinal*. 1885. Havelock Ellis (trans.,1894). Everyman's Library. (PDF.)

-----------------. 'Le Petit Village', In *Les Nouveaux contes à Ninon*, 1874. Québec : BEQ Jean-Yves Dupuis, Vol. 226. PDF. (Paris : G. Charpentier, 1879)

-----------------. *The Beast Within* (trans. by Roger Whitehouse). London: Penguin, 2007(1890).

----------------.*The Belly of Paris*. Brian Nelson (trans.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007 (*Le Ventre de Paris*, 1874).

---------------. *The Drinking Den*. Robin Buss (trans.). London: Penguin, 2000 (2003). PDF. (*L'Assommoir* (*The Dram Shop*), 1877.)

----------------. *Thérèse Raquin*. 1867. Paris: Gallimard, 2014 (2001, 1979).

APPENDIX

The French Realist and Naturalist Works Mentioned

Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary: Mœurs de Province* (1857, originally in 1856 in *La Revue de Paris*) (*Madame Bovary, Provincial Manners*)

Emile Zola, *Thérèse Raquin* (1867)

--------------- *Le Ventre de Paris (The Belly of Paris*) (1873)

--------------- *Les Nouveaux contes à Ninon* (1874)

-------------- *L'Assommoir* (*The Dram-Shop* or *The Gin Palace*) (1877)

-------------- *Nana* (1880)

-------------- *Au Bonheur des Dames* (1883, originally 1882 in Gil Blas)

-------------- *Germinal* (1885)

--------------*La Terre* (1887)

-------------- *La Bête humaine* (*The Human Beast*, *The Beast in Man* or *The Beast Within*). (1890)

-------------- *L'Argent* (1891)

--------------*Le Docteur Pascal* (1893)

Guy de Maupassant, *Sur l'eau* (1876)

----------------------*Boule de Suif* (1880)

---------------------*La Parure (The Necklace)* (1884)

--------------------*En Voyage (A Railway Story)* (*Le Gaulois*, 1883; *Miss Harriet*, 1884)

--------------------*Bel-Ami* (1885)

-------------------*En Wagon* (1885)

Honoré de Balzac, *La Comédie humaine* (1842-1848- publication of the collection of the re-edited novels-- initially 1830-1856) (It englobes all his novels, more than ninety, collected under this title.)

-------------------------- *Illusions perdues* (1837-1843) (This is part of one section of *La Comédie humaine*, entitled *Scenes from Provincial Life –Studies of Manners*. This section includes three novels, the second of which is *Un Grand homme de province à Paris*, 1839)

-------------------------- *Le Père Goriot* (1835)

Joris-Karl Huysmans*, Les Sœurs Vatard* (1879)

-------------------------- *A Rebours* (1884)

Jules & Edmond de Goncourt, *Sœur Philomène* (1861)

ملخص

يتعامل البحث الحالي بشكل نسبي مع تمثيل البيئات الريفية والحضرية في مجموعة من الروايات الواقعية والطبيعية من الآداب الأمريكية والأفريقية الناطقة بالإنجليزية. تتكون مجموعة دراسة الأدب الأمريكي من Maggie: A Girl of the Streets لستيفن كرين (1893) ، و تيودور درايزر Sister Carrie (1900) ، وأبتون سنكلير The Jungle (1906) ، و سنكلير لويس Main Street (1920). و مجموعة نصوص من الأدب الأفريقي الناطق بالإنجليزية هي Alan Paton's، Cry The Beloved Country (1948) – جنوب إفريقيا ، Chinua Achebe No Longer at Ease (1960) – (نيجيريا) ، Cyprian Ekwensi's Jagua Nana (1961) – Nigeria ، و Ngugi Wa Thiong's Petals of Blood (1977 – كينيا).

ينصب التركيز الأساسي لهذا البحث على ثنائية الريف – المدينة، بما في ذلك فحص تمثيل المكونات الأكثر أهمية لكل جزء، أي البيئة (الفضاء) وسكانها. البيئة الريفية التي يتم تناولها هنا في كلا الأدبين هي البيئة الزراعية الرعوية، أي المدينة الصغيرة ذات الأراضي الزراعية وكذلك سكانها. المناطق الإقليمية التي تخضع للتركيز في النصوص الأمريكية هي كولومبيا سيتي ، ويسكونسن، وضواحي شيكاغو (الغابية) ، وغوفر بريري ، مينيسوتا. منذ Maggie هي في الأساس رواية قصيرة تتناول حصريًا المدينة ، أي نيويورك – كما يشير عنوانها الفرعي ، قصة نيويورك – ، وبالتالي ، فهي مستبعدة من دراستنا للمقاطعة.

فيما يتعلق بالمناطق الريفية قيد الدراسة في الأعمال الأدبية الأفريقية المختارة ، فهي قرية Ilmorog (التي تحولت فيما بعد إلى New Ilmorog) ، في شمال وسط كينيا؛ قرية Ndotsheni في مقاطعة ناتال (Ixopo) ، في شرق جنوب إفريقيا؛ باغانا ، مسقط رأس فريدي نام ، وكذلك أوجابو ، قرية جاغوا نانا الأصلية في شرق نيجيريا؛ وقرية أوموفيا الأصلية لأوبي ، في نيجيريا. أما البيئة الحضرية التي تمت معالجتها في كلا الأدبين، فهي تتكون من المدينة الحديثة، مع عناصرها المكونة – بما في ذلك سكانها– وجوانبها الرأسمالية الغالبة ومن بينها التجارة والتصنيع والاستهلاك. في مجموعتنا الأدبية الأمريكية، المدن التي سيتم دراستها هي شيكاغو، ومدينة نيويورك، وواشنطن. في النصوص الأفريقية المختارة ، سيتم إلقاء الضوء على مدينة لاغوس في نيجيريا ونيروبي في كينيا وجوهانسبرغ في جنوب إفريقيا.

يجعل هذا العمل البحثي من اهتماماته الأساسية فحصًا للطرق التي يتم بها تصوير الريف والمدينة في روايات تدور في سياق حضري وحديث يتميز بالفردية والمادية، لذلك، من المهم أن نلقي الضوء على مكانة الرعوية في عصر تتفوق فيه الصناعة بشكل صارخ على الزراعة ، وتتفوق الحداثة على التقاليد. كنتيجة منطقية للتصنيع والتوسع الحضري الضخم ، الذي تم تسهيله بشكل كبير من خلال وسائل النقل المهمة (مثل الآلة – أو القطار – والسكك الحديدية) ، فإن تدهور الريف أمر لا مفر منه على الرغم من صراعه اليائس مع القوى الرأسمالية الساحقة. يتعامل الروائيون الأفارقة والأمريكيون في مجموعتنا مع قضية تهميش الريف وصعود المدينة كحدود بديلة بنفس الطريقة تقريبًا نظرًا لحقيقة أن الانتقال من الريف إلى العمران يتوافق مع عصر الواقعية.

في ضوء التاريخ الأمريكي والأفريقي من ناحية ، ونظرية التأثير والتناص التي تسمح لنا بتقييم تراث فلوبير و إميل زولا خارج الحدود الأوروبية من ناحية أخرى ، يحاول هذا العمل البحثي شرح –من خلال النهج النصي والتاريخي– نقاط التقارب والاختلاف في تمثيل الريف والمدينة من قبل المؤلفين الأفارقة والأمريكيين المختارين، بالإضافة إلى الأسباب الكامنة وراء مثل هذا التصوير للانقسام الموجود منذ فترة طويلة.

البيئات الريفية الحضرية الروايات الطبيعية